

MAGONIA 96

OCTOBER 2007

CONTEMPORARY VISION AND BELIEF

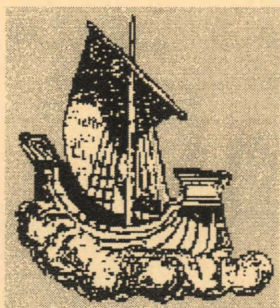


SPECTRES
MEETING IN A
CEMETERY: **DAVID
SIVIER** ASKS WHO
WOULD WANT TO
RE-WRITE THE BIBLE

NIGEL WATSON
FIGHTS HIS WAY
THROUGH A WEB
OF FAKE VIDEOS

PETER ROGERSON
WONDERS WHAT
REALLY HAPPENED
IN NEW
HAMPSHIRE FORTY
YEARS AGO





MAGONIA⁹⁶

INCORPORATING MUFOB 141

OCTOBER 2007

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Magonia is available by exchange with other magazines, or on subscription at the following rates for FOUR issues:

United Kingdom	£8.00
United States	\$20.00
Euro Zone	€15.00

- US subscribers please pay with dollar bills. We are unable to accept checks drawn on American Banks
- European subscribers should pay using euro banknotes.
- Cheques and money orders should be made payable to JOHN RIMMER

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EDITORIALNOTES

Magonia is rapidly approaching number 100, a remarkable achievement for any small circulation magazine in this field, and when you remember that this sequence follows on from the original MUFOB magazine, our total number of issues comes to 141. This represents forty years of continuous publication, with just a short blip in the early seventies when both editors moved homes and jobs.

This might be a good idea to take stock of what this magazine is about, and what might happen to it in the future - don't worry, this isn't going to be one of those 'we're broke, send us lots of money' type editorials which crop up from time to time!

One thing that has become very clear over the past decade is that the era of the printed UFO magazine has come to an end, and the reasons for this are not entirely unconnected with the fact that the era of traditional UFO research has also pretty much come to an end.

Ten or fifteen years ago the letterbox at Magonia Towers would rattle daily with deliveries of UFO and UFO/Forcean magazines. Now, apart from the unstoppable *MUFON UFO Journal* and the impregnable *Saucer Smear* from the US, and a few more brave survivors, there is little remaining in the UFO sphere

In Britain, *FSR* is dead, *BUFORA* is in suspended animation, one or two local titles survive, recalling the early days of stencil duplicated bulletins (only now word processing provides the technology, allowing for even wilder excesses of design), and there is some interesting UFO material being published in Scandinavia.

Part of the reason is, of course, the Internet, which is replacing and supplementing print publication throughout the media, but it seems to me that even the Internet UFO scene is drying up. What should be a medium for vigorous debate and the development of new ideas is becoming an inward-looking talking-shop.

The American UFO scene seems to be dominated by endless rehashes of

Roswell, MJ12, and one or two other American or American military related cases, with alleged amazing new revelations coming from death-bed confessions, and the confused recollections of elderly participants in early UFO investigations.

And in a new development which seems guaranteed to limit even further the degree of open discussion on UFO topics, the leading American Internet forum, *UFO UpDates*, has gone over to subscription membership (although a select few 'serious ufologists' are to be allowed to remain subscription-free, and at the moment this would seem to include *Magonia*!).

It would be pointless to prophesy yet again 'the death of ufology'. The topic will continue as there will always be a new generation of potential ufologists waiting to rediscover the wheel. More importantly UFO studies will continue as a historical and psycho-social subject, not least for the study of ufologists themselves. Perhaps this is currently its most interesting aspect, as we have seen with recent articles in *Magonia* and elsewhere by David Clarke and Andy Roberts.

So where do these circumstances leave this magazine? I frankly cannot see any real future for the continuation of print UFO magazines, and although *Magonia* has for a long time given wide coverage to topics with only a tangential connection with ufology, it is still at its core a UFO magazine. So I have decided that *Magonia* will cease publication with number 99, next year (this is the reason our subscription period has been reduced)

However, plans are being developed for a possible successor magazine, with the working title *Vision and Belief*. This will be in a quite different format from *Magonia*, and will cover a wider range of topics. Planning is still in an early stage, and I hope to have more details in the next issue of *Magonia*, in the meantime I would very much like to hear your views on how we can progress.

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Spectres Meeting in a Cemetery

David Sivier discovers that *The Da Vinci Code* is just the latest in a long series of attempts to re-write the Bible

Undoubtedly one of the strangest features of the conspiracist worldview, at least to those rooted in the Rankean tradition of historiography, where documents are the unequivocal route to established, objective facts, is its mutable, post-modern nature. Fact and fiction meet and merge, with the latter being taken over as solid, indisputable fact, to be studied and analysed by the secret initiates into the conspiratorial worldview. Its most notable contemporary expression is Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. A global best-seller, it's been denounced by Roman Catholic cardinals, become the subject of TV interviews, features and documentaries, stimulated a burgeoning tourism industry in which the book's fans and readers travel in the footsteps of their fictional heroes to exotic locales such as St Sulpice in Paris and Rosslyn Chapel near Edinburgh. These pilgrimages are as much genuinely spiritual as literary, as some of the book's readers have gone in search of the secret, mystical legacy, hidden and suppressed by the Roman Catholic church's falsification of religious history in pursuit of its own ideological and political programme, a false history ruthlessly enforced by the murderous papal thought police of Opus Dei. According to the American pollster George Bama, of the American adults who finished the book, 53 per

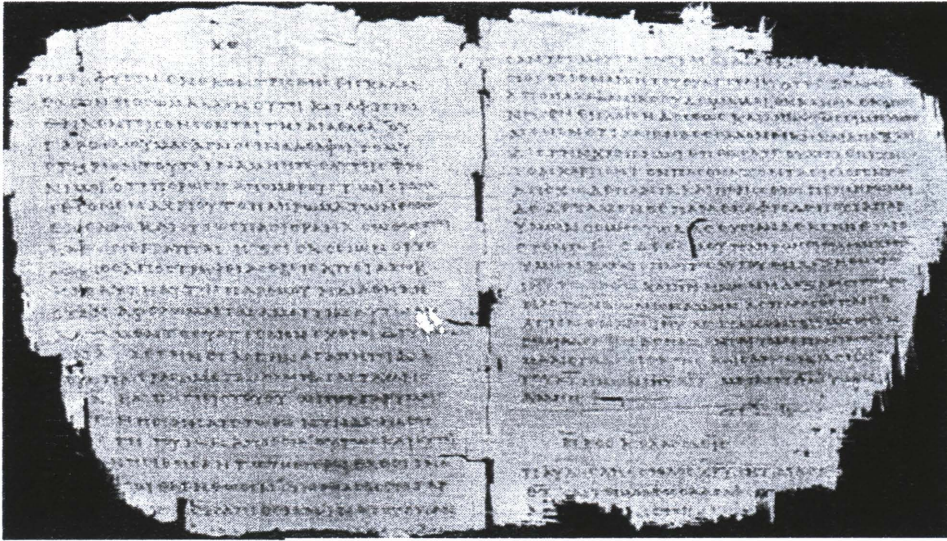
cent said it was helpful in their personal spiritual growth and understanding, while a Canadian survey conducted by National Geographic concluded that 32 per cent of those who read it believed its theories.¹

None of this is remotely new. The confusion of fact and fiction has been a feature of the worldview since disaffected young Americans in the 1970s took over the satirical novel *Report from Iron Mountain* in the 1970s, in which Soviet and American spies were satirised as secretly co-operating, to keep their respective populations in the dark about the real nature of global politics, while providing pork-barrel jobs for the defence industries, as a real, suppressed report, unveiling the cynicism and venality of the world's secret states. Brown's idea, that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had children, has strong affinities with Lincoln, Baigent and Leigh's *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, and succeeding works of religious pseudo-history, like Picknett and Prince's *The Templar Revelation*.

Even as fiction Brown's novel is unremarkable. The Vatican has long been a subject for fictional intrigue because of its role as the nerve centre and powerhouse, spiritual and temporal, of the Roman Catholic Church. Most of these authors have based their plots on the murky world of Vatican banking, particularly the allegations that the Vatican bank acted as a conduit for Nazi funds to be smuggled out of Europe after the Allied victory to expatriate Nazis who had fled to

South America.² When aging Nazis started to seem passé, the Vatican could always be cast in the villain's role again as the fictional enforcer of oppressive, institutional falsehood and evil. One novel from the early 1990s had the Vatican, CIA and KGB jockeying for power after the clandestine discovery of Christ's body in the Middle East. The 2001 film *The Body* featured Derek Jacobi playing a fugitive Roman Catholic priest who had stumbled on the secret truth of Christ's body, and so was hunted by violent enforcers of his spiritual masters' will, determined that this disruptive fact never leak out to explode the fabric of the Roman Catholic faith.

Yet while all these books were bestsellers, none have had quite the commercial success of *The Da Vinci Code*, a situation that says much about the relative status of fiction over dry works of ostensible fact in the public's literary appetite, and the deep, spiritual needs of Western humanity at the beginnings of the twenty-first century. Part of the book's success lies in its engagement with deep issues of Christian historical and scriptural authenticity going back to the compilation of the established, orthodox Christian canon. However, in its treatment of these profound religious anxieties, *The Da Vinci Code* owes less to the debate within Roman Christianity between the Catholic and Gnostic churches, than to the Reformation and Protestant perceptions of Roman Catholicism as a false, oppressive religion. These perceptions and prejudices were sharpened by the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the social and intellectual dislocation of the new, mass, industrial and democratic societies of the nineteenth century.



The date of the establishment of the New Testament canon is more problematic, as the first list, which exactly corresponds to the modern New Testament dates from the fourth century AD

This changing social and intellectual world presented challenges to Christianity as a whole, as religious doctrines were challenged by scientific scepticism and new forms of textual criticism of the Bible, including the discoveries of variant Biblical texts, which cast doubt on the authority of the canonical scriptures. Roman Catholicism, however, felt these dislocations particularly acutely because of its perceived alliance with reactionary, monarchist and anti-democratic regimes. Within Roman Catholicism, certain specific orders are perceived as particularly authoritarian and repressive. Brown's villains in *The Da Vinci Code* are Opus Dei, genuinely the subject of contemporary anxiety because of the founder's links with Franco's regime in Fascist Spain. Behind their fictional brutality and machinations, however, are earlier, Reformation and Enlightenment images of sadistic and repressive monks, and specifically the fear of the Jesuits, an order haunted by accusations of political intrigue, fanatical loyalty and black magic.

The compilation of the Christian canon of scripture - the collection of books regarded as authoritative - predates Roman Catholicism, if this is understood as a distinct ecclesiastical denomination, by several centuries. Early Christianity already possessed a canon of Old Testament scripture in the form of the Septuagint, the Greek translation compiled in Alexandria, in common with most Diaspora Jews outside Palestine by the end of the first century AD³. The date of the establishment of the New Testament canon is more problematic, as the first list, which exactly corresponds to the modern New Testament dates from the fourth century AD⁴. The *Diatessaron* of Tatian, an attempt to harmonise the four gospels by placing them parallel to each other in rows, and references to the New Testament by the early Christian fathers Irenaeus and Tertullian as scripture,

indicate that something like the modern Christian New Testament had been formed by AD. 200.⁵

Christianity at the time was a network of autonomous congregations, largely centred on the towns, under the direction of a bishop, who was served by a staff of presbyters and deacons. These diverse independent churches formed a united community by the mutual recognition of each other by the bishops, and by the ordination of each bishop by at least three bishops from the neighbouring communities.⁶ The formal recognition of the claim by the Bishop of Rome, propounded in 341 AD, to leadership of a wider Christian church did not occur until 451 AD, when the Council of Chalcedon established the superiority of see of Rome over the Christian church, two and a half centuries after the establishment of the Christian canon.⁷

The doctrinal unity of this early church was threatened by radical attacks on the canon by the Gnostics. Here, however, the Catholic church acted to preserve its scriptural heritage from innovation. For the heresiarch Marcion, the good, compassionate God revealed in Jesus Christ was in stark contrast from the harsh God of the Old Testament, a God he saw as separate and evil, so that he recommended the rejection of the Old Testament altogether, and employed only a severely edited version of the New Testament.⁸ Other Gnostics went further and began compiling, in addition to commentaries on the canonical scriptures, other gospels of their own.⁹ Far from being seen as the representations of authentic Christianity, in contrast to the catholic scriptures, these works were later. It's possible that the entire corpus of New Testament books had been written by 70 AD.¹⁰ Valentinus, one of the main Gnostic heresiarchs identified by Irenaeus and the early church, and the probable author of the Gospel of Truth, began teaching in Rome in the

second century under the Emperor Antoninus Pius.¹¹ Rather than preserving Christ's original teachings, catholic Christian scholars such as Hippolytus saw the Gnostics instead as confusing Christ's doctrines with the metaphysical speculations of earlier Pagan philosophers, a view that is endorsed by many modern scholars.¹²

Yet if Gnosticism did not represent the preservation of an authentic Christian witness, nevertheless anxieties about the accuracy and status of the canonical scriptures remained, to become acute with the rise of Humanism and scepticism during the Renaissance. The rediscovery by the Humanists of more complete ancient texts, and their emphasis on studying the Bible and the Church fathers in new and more correct editions were a vital stimulus to the Reformation. Erasmus' Greek edition of the New Testament with its glosses on the original meaning of words such as *ecclesia* and *presbyter*, 'church' and 'priest', pointed to the immense difference between the early church and contemporary, European Catholic piety. Erasmus himself believed that salvation could come only through the Christian's imitation of the life of Christ, rather than through the miracles and ceremonies of traditional religion.¹³ He was particularly stinging about contemporary scholastic theology and its practitioners, whose heads were 'so swollen with these absurdities, and a thousand more like them.'¹⁴ While Luther went far beyond the Humanists in his attack on Roman Catholic doctrine, undoubtedly the rise of Humanist speculation and its assault on traditional theology and piety assisted the spread of Protestantism as the recovery of the spirituality of the early Christian church.¹⁵

The Reformation's immediate effect on the canon of scripture, however, was to exclude the books of the Apocrypha - 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah, the Prayer of Manasses and 1 and 2 Maccabees, as well as the Song of the Three Holy Children, the History of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon from the Book of Daniel - because they were found only in the Septuagint, rather than the original Hebrew scriptures, and so considered unreliable.¹⁶ In reacting against church tradition, Protestantism viewed only the Bible as the authoritative source of faith. Thus, when twentieth century scholars such as F.C. Baur discovered Early Catholicism in the New Testament, following Schleiermacher they considered it a corruption of Christ's original message by Greek philosophy and Roman legalism, and sought to purge scripture of this contamination in order to return to the 'historical Jesus'.¹⁷

One product of the Protestant project to return to the pristine Christianity of the New Testament was its automatic rejection of the papacy as the antichrist, beginning with Luther's denunciation of his opponents within

the papal curia in his tract *Against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist*.¹⁸ It was a stance, which became explicit with his depiction of the Whore of Babylon wearing the papal tiara in the 1522 edition of the Bible.¹⁹ Subsequent attempts to curb the spread of Protestantism by violence by princes such as Philip II of Spain and Francis I of France, culminating in the wars of religion of the seventeenth century, seemed to confirm to European Protestants that the papacy was indeed the brutal persecutor of true, authentic Christianity. From this background of religious violence, political intrigue and terror, the Jesuits emerged as particular targets for suspicion and vilification by both Protestants and Roman Catholics alike.

They were accomplished assassins, training fanatics through the use of their spiritual authority to murder their enemies without remorse. According to the 1610 pamphlet, *A Discoverie of the Most Secret and Subtile Practices of the Jesuites*, they did this by presenting their chosen assassin with an ivory casket, decorated with an Agnus Dei, and inscribed with 'sweet and perfumed characters', containing a knife wrapped in a scarf. The Jesuits removed this weapon in an elaborate ritual in which it was sprinkled with holy water, and five or six beads added to the haft, to represent the number of stabs the weapon was to make, and the numbers of souls released from Purgatory by the murder. The Jesuits then invoked God's angels to fill the future assassin, strengthening him for his task, informing him that he was now no more a mortal man but a kind of deity and that he would pass immediately into heaven without entering purgatory.²⁰ The 1759 pamphlet *The Doctrine and Practices of the Jesuits* declared that the order possessed a master poisoner, able to equip assassins with poisons to place in eating utensils which remained lethally effective even after they were washed ten times.²¹

They were masters of equivocation and dissimulation, and immensely wealthy. The order reputedly had vast, highly profitable gold and silver mines in Latin America, as well as a deliberate policy of targeting wealthy widows, persuading them after their bereavement to take up a life of prayer and contemplation and give their monies instead to the church.²² They were masters of disguise, present in every company, from the highest to the lowest, in inns, playhouses and taverns.²³ They worked their way into the company of princes, manipulating the minds of their protégés and former pupils through their control of education in the schools and lay sodalities.²⁴ They were omnivorous perversers of monstrous sexual appetites. The schools, naturally, were hotbeds of homosexuality and paedophilia.²⁵ As the case of Jean-Baptiste Girard and Catherine Cadiere in 1731 reputedly showed, at least to the authors of *Spiritual Fornication. A Burlesque Poem* and *The Wanton Jesuit*, they also used magic and



As the case of Jean-Baptiste Girard and Catherine Cadiere in 1731 reputedly showed, at least to the authors of *Spiritual Fornication. A Burlesque Poem* and *The Wanton Jesuit*, they also used magic and invocations to the Devil to seduce

their young female charges.²⁶

This last allegation was particularly tenacious. In 1846 Johann Scheible in Stuttgart published a manual of magic attributed to them, the *Verus Jesuitarum Libellus*, or *True Magical Work of the Jesuits*. This was supposedly first published in Latin in Paris in 1508, along with the *Praxis Magica Fausti*, or *Magical Elements of Dr. John Faust, Practitioner of Medicine*, of 1571.²⁷ As the Jesuit order was only founded in 1540, although its roots go back to an informal association of St. Ignatius de Loyola and his friends, including Francis Xavier, there's no real doubt that the *Libellus* is a forgery. The *Praxis Magica Fausti*, allegedly printed from an original manuscript at the Weimar Municipal Library, is also forged, as at the time there wasn't a library there either.²⁸ Prefiguring twentieth century rhetoric and fears of brainwashed cults, Jesuits were similarly seen as indoctrinated automatons, crushed of independent thought and will, accusations supported by Loyola's recommendation that a member of the company should resemble a cadaver and have no desire for self-determination, or the staff used by an old man, serving him in whatever way he pleased.²⁹ As Loyola was a former soldier, and the Society headed by generals, the order was viewed as a military machine of ruthless and sadistic discipline. The order possessed a vast 'library' of instruments of

torture with which the Order's superiors tormented novices should they show any sign of disaffection or individuality. If a novice seemed to be wavering in his absolute commitment to the order, or was likely to desert and betray their secrets, he was immediately placed in the stocks until he almost perished from hunger and cold.³⁰ In this the myth of the Jesuits prefigured contemporary suspicions about Opus Dei, and the cilice, the curious studded garter members are required to wear for about an hour a day to mortify their flesh. And needless to say, like Opus Dei, they were also fanatically loyal to the Pope. Thus, to the anonymous author of the 1615 *A True Relation of the Proceedings against John Ogilvie*, in addition to their usual monastic vows they had a fourth: 'to make the pope the lord of all the earth, emperors, kings and princes his dependents, to be removed, altered, changed, deposed and killed, when it pleaseth his holiness to give commission.'³¹

As a result of this, Jesuits were perceived to be at the heart of plots against Elizabeth I, Charles I and Charles II of England, William of Orange, Henry III, Henry IV and Louis XIV of France, the American presidents William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, James A. Garfield, William McKinley and Abraham Lincoln.³² They were responsible for the French Wars of Religion, the Gunpowder Plot and Great Fire of London, governing France through their puppets Cardinals Mazarin and Richelieu, and attempting to subvert decent British society through the creation of the Quakers. Their conspiracy was truly global. They were accused of Machiavellian political intrigue in Ethiopia and their model Indian colonies in Paraguay were seen as an attempt to create their own power-base within that country, a Jesuit state within a state.³³

While it is easy to see why Protestants should fear the Jesuit order for their missionary activities and attempts to reconvert those peoples to Roman Catholicism, suspicion of the Order was also extremely common in Roman Catholic countries. They did have an enormous range of commercial activities - banking, mining, real estate, and involvement in the spice and silk trades, as well as vast and extremely lucrative agricultural estates in Mexico.³⁴ They also produced theoretical political tracts, such as that of Juan Mariana's *De rege et Regis institutione*, which argued that ultimately a monarch's power derived from the people, and which was duly burned by the Parlement of Paris as a threat to the French constitution in 1610.³⁵ Rival Roman Catholic orders resented the Jesuit's competition for students at the universities, as confessors to the great and powerful, and as missionaries in the conversion of the heathen.³⁶ Ordinary parish priests and bishops resented the Order's intrusion into local parish and diocesan affairs and refusal to pay tithes and other ecclesiastical taxes.³⁷

In the fraught political atmosphere of Elizabethan England, ordinary Roman Catholic priests who sought to maintain a non-confrontational ministry bitterly resented the appearance of Jesuit missionaries and their aggressive campaigns to win back heretics for bringing secular priests, and 'other more honest and single-hearted Catholics' into 'a gulf of danger and discredit'.³⁸ The Church within the various independent Roman Catholic nations resented the Jesuits as representing transmontane, papal intrusion into their specific ecclesiastical affairs, while Roman Catholic monarchs resented the papacy itself as a rival axis of power.³⁹ Thus, 'whenever a national government grew tired of Roman behaviour ... it was likely to voice its dislike of the Society of Jesus, a body with (notionally at least) a supranational identity who even went so far as to swear a special fourth vow of obedience to the pope.'⁴⁰ The result was a series of arrests and suppressions of the Order: Portugal in 1758, France 1764 and Spain in 1767 before the Order was finally dissolved, by papal decree completely in 1773.⁴¹

Although the Order was reformed in 1814, the legacy of suspicion and distrust remained. In addition to political attacks from governments from Spain, France and America, radical authors such as Eugene Sue, in his *Le Juif Errant*, serialised in the French newspaper *Le Constitutionnel* in 1844-5, launched fresh attacks on the Jesuits.⁴² Tellingly, one of the anti-Jesuit characters in the book is a German nationalist, dreaming the Enlightenment dream of a rational, liberating religion, purged of priestcraft and superstition.⁴³ Thus, in addition to the previous accusations directed against the Society, the Jesuits were now viewed also as the agents of stifling theological irrationalism and reaction. This view was especially popular in America, where Roman Catholicism in general and the Jesuits in particular were widely resented because of concerns over immigration. In contrast to American democracy and reason, Roman Catholicism was reviled as 'a system of darkness and slavery, mental, bodily and spiritual' completely antithetical to 'republican civic theories in legislation and political economy'.⁴⁴ Brown's depiction of the Roman Catholic church, and Opus Dei in particular, are merely the latest permutation of this American perception of irrational and repressive Roman Catholicism.

Traditional fear of the Jesuits is only one of the historical factors behind the appearance of *The Da Vinci Code* and the various related works of religious pseudo-history. Equally important were the Victorian crisis of faith and the emergence of Theosophy. Although the Deists of the eighteenth century had argued for a *Deus absconditus*, an absent God who had created the world, which He had then left to run itself according to the laws of Newtonian mechanics, it was in the 19th century that such



Charles Hennell argued that there was nothing mysterious in Christ's life. He was merely a religious teacher attempting to regain the throne of David

religious scepticism became acute. Late nineteenth-century radicals, such as Scepticus Britannicus and Thomas Paine, followed William Godwin in viewing God and religion as repressive institutions, which would be removed by democracy and scientific progress.⁴⁵ The Romantics retained this deep alienation from traditional Christianity, preferring instead a celebration of nature as leading to a feeling of transcendence. Keats' *Endymion*, for example, articulated a Platonic notion of spiritual ascent to the divine through encountering natural 'symbols of immensity', which point to their platonic archetypes. Keats himself was bitterly hostile to the established church, arguing in his 'To Percy Shelley, on the Degrading Notions of Deity', that the Anglican church had created its idea of God from fear, vested interests and bigotry.⁴⁶

In addition to these Romantic, radical sentiments the Enlightenment project of demythologising and producing a rational religion, as expounded in such 18th century works such as J. Toland's 1696 *Christianity Not Mysterious*, continued with the publication of works such as Charles Hennell's 1838 *An Inquiry concerning the Origins of Christianity*. Hennell argued that there was nothing mysterious in Christ's life. He was merely a religious teacher attempting to regain the throne of David. After His execution by the Romans, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, as a precautionary measure, removed his body from the tomb, which the early church mistook as the Resurrection. While this view also suffers from logical inconsistencies and contradictions, it was very influential. The radical German writer, David Friedrich Strauss, had presented much the same image of Christ three years earlier in his

Life of Jesus. Both Hennell and Strauss had a profound effect on leading intellectuals in Victorian society, such as George Eliot.⁴⁷ The impetus for this attack on the historicity of the Incarnation - the central tenet of mainstream Christianity - came largely from the German philosopher Lessing, who argued that no rational basis could be found for such developments, which were completely unreasonable. As a result, writers such as Ernest Renan could construct a life of Jesus, which portrayed Him as a mere human being with a case of megalomania.⁴⁸ Other Victorian intellectuals, such as J.A. Froude, Matthew Arnold and F.W. Newman lost their faith through repugnance at theological doctrines such as original sin, predestination and substitutionary atonement.⁴⁹ As a result, the holy God and man of the Gospels was re-imagined as nothing more than a moral teacher.⁵⁰

The result of this disaffection with institutional Christianity was not only the growth of scepticism and atheism, but also the appearance of a number of modernist rewritings of the Gospels presented as the rediscovery of an authentic Christianity. These included such works as Gideon Jasper Ouseley's *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, 1900; Nicholas Notovitch's *Life of Saint Issa, Best of the Sons of Men*, 1894; Dr. Levi H. Dowling's 1911 *The Aquarian Gospel; The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness*, 1919; Rev. W.D. Mahan's *A Correct Transcript of Pilate's Court*, 1879; B. Shehadi's *The Confession of Pontius Pilate*, 1893; Ernst Edler van der Planitz's *The Letter of Benan*, 1910; T.G. Cole's *The Twenty-Ninth Chapter of Acts*, 1871; and Moccia's *The Letter of Jesus Christ*; of 1917.

These false Gospels are a heterogeneous mix, reflecting their authors' diverse motives and viewpoints. *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, written by Gideon Jasper Ouseley, a clergyman in the Catholic Apostolic Church, seems to have been written to promulgate Ouseley's own pantheist, vegetarian and tee-total views, including the androgynous nature of God, styled by Ouseley as 'our parent in heaven'. Ouseley was strongly influenced by the doctrines of the Theosophists Edward Maitland and Anna Kingsford. Despite purporting to be the reconstruction of an original Aramaic gospel narrative, Ouseley stated that he received it 'in dreams and visions of the night'.⁵¹

Notovitch's *Life of Saint Issa, Best of the Sons of Men*, pretended to be a translation of a Tibetan life of Christ, stating how Christ travelled to India to learn the ways of the Buddhas. While it's one of the major sources for various fringe religious theories attempting to link Christ with India and Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, students of oriental literatures and religions in the nineteenth century were not hesitant in declaring it to be a forgery, especially after interviews with the monks at Himis, where Notovitch claimed to

have seen the *Life*, revealed that they had no such document and had never even seen Notovitch.⁵²

Dowling's *The Aquarian Gospel* was similarly influenced by Theosophy and contemporary interest in oriental spirituality, as well as Christian Science. Dowling was a believer in the Akashic records, and, like Ouseley, wrote it under the influence of astral communications received during the night. In it, Christ not only studies with the great rabbi Hillel, but also meets Brahmins and Buddhists in India, Mencius in China, and Persian magi, while travelling through India, Tibet, Assyria, Babylonia, Athens, and Italy before settling in Egypt where he joins and achieves all seven degrees of initiation into the sacred brotherhood at Heliopolis.⁵³

The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness, is an account of Christ's life as an Essene monk, in which John the Baptist, the angel of the annunciation, Nicodemus and the angel at the tomb are Essenes, and it is the Essenes who arrange the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, and carry him away to be revived after the Crucifixion. Christ, in this false gospel, is indeed attracted to Mary Magdalene, but does not marry her because of His monastic vows. Despite purporting to be a translation of yet another ancient document, the text itself was completely anachronistic, and the fact that neither the manuscript, or even photographs or details of its provenance were presented made it clear that it was a forgery. The thesis that Christ was an Essene was first propounded by Carl Bahrdt, circa 1784-92, and popularised by C.H. Venturini 1800-02, while it took the idea of Christ being resuscitated after Crucifixion from Paulus, and Hose's *History of Jesus* of 1876. The book as a whole was probably inspired by the manuscript discoveries of the German orientalist Tischendorf in Egypt and the Levant, including the *Codex Sinaiticus*, in 1859, as well as various novels and stories set in Egypt in the 1860s and 70s.⁵⁴

Rev. W.D. Mahan's *A Correct Transcript of Pilate's Court* has Pilate attempting to save Christ from the Jewish authorities as they execute Him during an insurrection against Rome. Although fraudulent, the book enjoyed immense success, and Mahan followed it up with a succession of similarly spurious religious documents, one of which plagiarised Ben-Hur. As a result, Mahan was found guilty of falsehood by the Presbyterian church and suspended from the ministry for one year. It appears Mahan was strongly influenced by the Alexander Walker's editions of the *Apocryphal Acts of Pilate* in volume XVI of the 1873 Edinburgh edition of the Ante-Nicene library. Mahan's motive in writing his own version may well have been to defend the historicity of the Biblical account from attacks from the sceptic and Republican politician Robert G. Ingersoll in the 1870s through the invention of documents that Mahan himself felt genuinely existed.⁵⁵



The Gospel of the Holy Twelve, written by Gideon Jasper Ouseley, a clergyman in the Catholic Apostolic Church, seems to have been written to promulgate Ouseley's own pantheist, vegetarian and teetotal views,

The Confession of Pontius Pilate similarly presents Pilate's viewpoint, presenting a narrative of his final years as an exile in Vienne, staying with his friend Fabicius Albinos, before finally, overcome with remorse, he commits suicide. Pilate here is also presented as attempting to rescue Christ, though unsuccessfully, and in reprisal commits terrible atrocities on the Jews before being recalled to Rome after complaints and accusations to Tiberius by Vitellius and Mary Magdalene. The book was originally written as an awowedly modern work by the Greek Orthodox bishop of Zahlah, Gerasimus Yarid, following similar fictional accounts of the Passion, such as that published about the same time in France by Anatole France. Its spurious antiquity was merely a creation of Shehadi.⁵⁶

The Letter of Benan is supposedly an account by the Egyptian priest and doctor, Benan, of Christ's life and training amongst the rabbis and Egyptian doctors, including the Therapeutae, and of Benan's subsequent journeys to Gaul, Britain and Roman Italy. Its publisher, Ernst Edler von der Planitz, wasn't an Egyptologist or religious scholar, but a novelist with a penchant for conspiracy theories, publishing such works as 'The Lie of Mayerling'. Again, the book seems influenced by Ebers' novels of ancient Egypt, such as *An Egyptian Princess* of 1864 and *Uarda* of 1877, as well as Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii*.⁵⁷

The Twenty-Ninth Chapter of Acts, on the other hand, has Paul travelling to Spain and Britain, where he preaches on the site of the future St. Paul's Cathedral, Mount Lud,

before travelling on through Gaul, Belgium, Switzerland, the Julian Alps, Illyria, Macedonia and Asia. In it, the Druids reveal to Paul that they are descended from the Jews who escaped from bondage in Egypt, and it appears to have been written to support the British-Israelite movement of the 1860s and 70s.⁵⁸

Moccia's spurious gospel was a lost thirty-three page Greek version. This was really a publicity stunt by Moccia for his forthcoming novel, but he abandoned it after he saw how seriously it was being taken.⁵⁹ If only Brown had shown similar discretion.

Other works included the forged *The Gospel of the Childhood of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Peter*, by the French Decadent writer Catulle Mendes; W.P. Crozier's *Letters of Pontius Pilate*, which purported to be Pilate's correspondence with the Roman philosopher Seneca; Catherine van Dyke's *Letters from Pontius Pilate's Wife*; the *Epistle of Kallikrates*, purporting to come from one of Paul's converts; the *Letter of Jesus Christ*, exhorting attendance at church and keeping the Sabbath, copies of which were pasted in houses as it promised protection for women in child-birth. This latter had a contemporary version in Greek, published by Michael Salvors, and supposedly discovered in the fragments of a meteorite smashed by Patriarch Joannicius of Jerusalem.⁶⁰

These nineteenth- and early twentieth-century apocrypha are the precursors to many of today's works of religious pseudo-history, presenting Christ as an Essene, or a friend of Pilate, or an initiate into secret Egyptian or Indian teachings. And like the documents Michael Baigent claims to have seen to support his view of Christ in *The Jesus Papers*, the ancient documents on which these texts were based similarly did not appear, and no supporting evidence was provided.⁶¹

Not only were these new, apocryphal gospels a response to contemporary questioning of the authenticity of the canonical gospels, but they were also a response to the emergence and circulation of genuinely ancient, non-canonical Jewish and Christian texts, such as the *Book of Enoch*, found in a fragmentary Slavonic version and in its complete form preserved in the canon of the Ethiopian Coptic Church. *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, written in the fourth or fifth centuries AD, was copied in eleventh century England, and was still circulating in chapbook editions in the eighteenth century.⁶² The 1876 Tischendorf edition of the early Greek and Latin versions may well have been the versions which inspired the spurious 19th century gospels. The *Egerton Gospel*, a fragmentary non-canonical gospel, was discovered in 1935.⁶³

A similar piece of a vanished gospel, Gospel Oxyrhincus 1224 was found c. 1890.⁶⁴ Gospel Oxyrhincus 1224 was discovered in 1903 and published in 1914.⁶⁵ Furthermore, apart from the spurious late nineteenth- and

early twentieth-century gospels, other non-canonical versions of the lives of the great figures of the Bible were circulating. Three hundred years before the publication of the *Gospel of Judas* in May 2006, for example, an account of the treacherous apostle's life was also circulating in the cheap, chapbook literature.⁶⁶

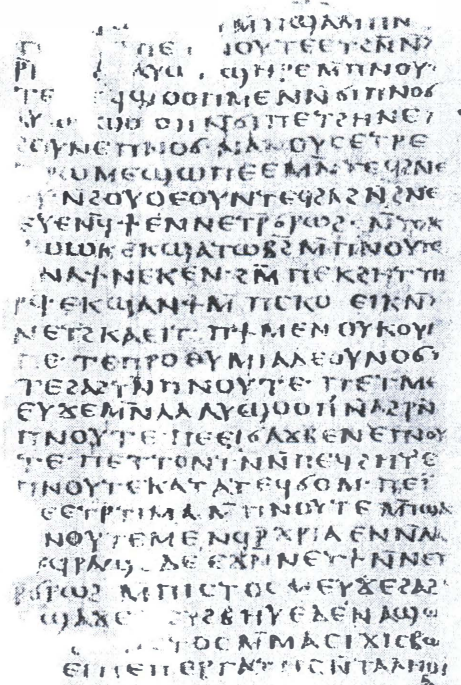
The most profound challenge to the authenticity of the Biblical scriptures came from the discovery of the Gnostic library of Chenoboskion and Nag Hammadi in Egypt, in 1945/6 and the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran in 1947.⁶⁷ With the discovery of these texts, more apocryphal and pseudepigraphal Jewish and Christian texts were gradually researched and published. The result was a flood of new translations of heterodox Judaeo-Christian texts, which had previously been lost or suppressed. These included the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, discovered in 1945; The Secret Book of James, 1945; The Dialogue of the Saviour; The Gospel of Mary, 1955; the Infancy Gospel of Thomas; The Infancy Gospel of James; The Gospel of Peter, parts of which had already been discovered in 1886 and a version published in 1972; and The Secret Gospel of Mark, discovered in 1958 and published in 1973.⁶⁸

References to a 'Teacher of Righteousness' and a 'Wicked Priest' in the Dead Sea Scrolls have similarly provided material for radical speculation, with scholars such as J.M. Allegro, Barbara Thiering, and Robert Eisenmann identifying them as Jesus, Paul, John the Baptist, and Christ's brother James.⁶⁹ In the view of at least one major scholar 'these theories fail the basic credibility test - they do not spring from, but are foisted on the texts', with the more likely candidate for the 'wicked priest' being Jonathan Maccabeus who accepted the pontifical vestments for the Temple at Jerusalem from the Seleucid usurper Alexander Bolas, or Alexander Jannaeus.⁷⁰

However, academic restrictions placed on research and publication by the director of the research programme into the scrolls, Father de Vaux, and the inability of a small group of seven scholars to complete such an enormous task, along with political difficulties with the Israeli authorities, meant that relatively little was published until the reorganisation of the project with a team of sixty scholars by Emanuel Tov in 1990, and the breach of the previous academic 'closed shop' around the manuscripts by the Biblical Archaeology Society and the Huntington Library in California.⁷¹ Unfortunately, the academic wrangling that had hindered proper publication and research into the scrolls appeared to lend credence to rumours that the 'Teacher of Righteousness' and 'Wicked Priest' were indeed Christ and the other major

Christian figures, and so gave rise to rumours that the Scrolls were being deliberately suppressed because they contained materials that would undermine and discredit Christianity completely. It is as a part of this atmosphere of religious anxiety, speculation and conspiracy theorising that *Holy Blood*, *Holy Grail* found such fertile soil amongst the public, and the *Da Vinci Code* sprang up.

This conspiracist view of the Roman Catholic Church has been compounded because of the very real problems the Vatican has experienced in coming to terms with modernity. With the advance of secularisation



The most profound challenge to the authenticity of the Biblical scriptures came from the discovery of the Gnostic library of Chenoboskion and Nag Hammadi in Egypt, in 1945/6 and the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran

in the nineteenth century, many of the traditional ecclesiastical roles of providing education, giving moral advice and presiding over marriages and funerals were lost to the state or private secular institutions, and the traditional seat of the papacy, Rome, was occupied and incorporated into the new Italy during the 1861-70 campaigns of unification.⁷²

The result of this was the official promulgation of the doctrine of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council of 1869-70, considered by some to be a 'magna carta of ecclesiastical absolutism', and the *Syllabus of Errors*, contained in the papal encyclical *Quanta Cura* of 1864.⁷³

The papal decree *Lamentabili* and

encyclical *Pascendi Dominica Gregis* of 1907 outlawed modernist thought in Roman Catholicism prohibiting the philosophies of Kant, Fichte and Hegel, and the application of secular historical techniques to criticise the authenticity of the Bible. Instead of Roman Catholic doctrine evolving through a historically conditioned process of debate, elaboration, adaptation and development, Roman Catholic doctrine was established as immutable and eternally true.⁷⁴ And as a reaction to the revolutionary turmoil of nineteenth century Europe, French Roman Catholic theoreticians like Joseph de Maistre and Francois Rene Chateaubriand articulated an extreme conservative ideology in which 'thrones and altars were to be seen as safeguards, as buffers against a return to the tragedies of the Terror. Christianity was to be privileged above philosophy; powerful popes were preferable to overconfident national churches; kings and established churches were better than elected assemblies and liberal constitutions; tradition was a safer bet than innovation.'⁷⁵

As a result, liberal Catholic views and agendas were denounced in the encyclicals *Mirari Vos* of 1832, and *Singularis Nos* of 1834. The fascination with alleged secret royalist bloodlines from Christ through the Merovingian kings in *The Holy Blood, and the Holy Grail*, and its successors, like *The Da Vinci Code*, can be seen as a deliberate mythologisation of this type of 'throne and altar' Catholicism.

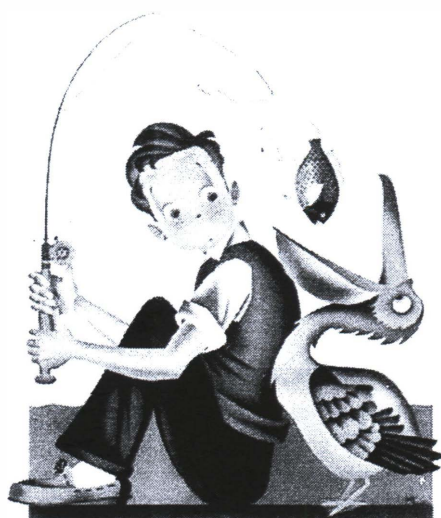
Although Christian Democrat parties had successfully emerged to defend Roman Catholicism against hostile Protestant and secular authorities in Bismarck's Germany and Belgium, papal disgust at nationalist appropriation of pontifical territories had led to a refusal to recognise the Italian state. Italian Roman Catholics were not even allowed to vote until 1919.⁷⁶ A rapprochement with the Italian state, which formally regulated the relations between Church and state in Italy and which granted the sovereign independence of the See of Rome and

compensated the Vatican for the loss of its territories, was only established with the Lateran Pacts with Fascist Italy of

1928.⁷⁷ The drawback to this treaty was that 'the papacy often seemed more allied to totalitarian Fascism than to democracy as the two movements headed towards a collision course in the 1930s. With the emergence of democracy in Italy after World War II and the new openness in the Church brought about by Pope John XXIII and Vatican II, a concordat based on privileges and tied historically to Fascism became an embarrassing liability.'⁷⁸ Worse, the emergence of extreme Right-wing clerical Fascist movements, such as the Rexists

THE PELICAN WRITES

El Pelicano es fuerte en sus apreciaciones, pero muy razonable.



ONE LIKELY REASON why ufology is not taken seriously by mainstream science, muses The Pelican, is the dearth of serious literature on the subject. Of course, all but a small proportion of the UFO literature is pseudo-scientific nonsense, lies and fantasies. But what about the Serious books and journals, produced by Serious Ufologists?

The Pelican has recently been studying an example of Serious UFO literature, Volume 31, No. 1 of the *International UFO Reporter* (January 2007). This is published by the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies and is edited by a team of Serious Ufologists (although not Serious enough to meet The Pelican's exacting standards). It seems at first glance to be a sober, scientific publication, but on closer inspection it is seen to be a good old-fashioned nuts-and-bolts ETH magazine, with the usual paranoid stuff about ridicule and government coverups preventing the Truth about UFOs from becoming generally known and accepted.

The Pelican will, on this occasion, confine most of his attention to the main article in this issue, 'A shot across the bow: Another look at the Big Sur incident' by Robert Hastings, who takes up 13 pages with his attempt to revive a report of an alleged encounter between a UFO and an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile which was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, to test an experimental enemy radar-defeating system and a dummy nuclear warhead, in September 1964.

The UFO allegedly caused the missile to crash, and the incident was filmed by the telescope/camera system at Big Sur, which had been set up to monitor the missile launches, according to "Lt. (now Dr.) Bob Jacobs", whose job it was to film the Atlas launch. "Following the dramatic incident, says Jacobs, a 16-mm version of the amazing film was shown to a small, select group at Vandenberg. Immediately thereafter, the crucial frames were cut out and quickly confiscated by two 'government agents' -- possibly working for the CIA -- who had been among those in attendance."

Jacobs's account was endorsed by another officer, retired Major Florenz J. Mansmann Jr. He was said to have ordered Jacobs to attend the screening of the film.

The controversy centres on two articles written about the incident. Jacobs presented his account of the sighting in an article entitled 'Deliberate deception: The Big Sur UFO filming'. (1) A few years later, Kingston A. George, who was project engineer for the telescope experiment, published an article debunking Jacobs's interpretation of the incident as an attack by a UFO. (2)

Jacobs begins his article with a preamble about the press and says that he had his original article on the Big Sur "Government-ordered UFO coverup" published in the *National Enquirer*. Now this publication could hardly be described as a scientific or technical journal, but his excuse was: "The *Enquirer* turned out to be the only publication I could find which was interested in printing the article at all." It perhaps did not occur to him that the editors of more serious publications did not agree with his interpretation of the events he described.

Also, Jacobs could not remember the precise date of the alleged UFO incident, except that it was in September 1964. It seems that his recollections of the incident were not based on notes taken at the time, but on his unaided memory.

Kingston A. George tells us that Jacobs was responsible for the logistics of the operation at Big Sur, but not for the interpretation of the images recorded on the film, as he was "technically not authorized to view the pictures we were collecting". George was thus puzzled by Jacobs's "weird claims" published many years later in *MUFON UFO Journal*.

According to Jacobs, in his *MUFON UFO Journal* article, he saw on the film an object flying into the frame:

"As the new object circumnavigated our hardware [an Atlas missile] it emitted four distinct bright flashes of light at approximately the 4 cardinal compass points of its orbit. ... The shape of the object was that of a classic 'flying saucer'. In the middle of the top half of the object was a dome. From that dome, or just beneath it, seemed to issue a beam of light which caused the flashes described."

According to Kingston George, an unusual incident did occur. The two warheads were fired off as planned, but some of the packing material also trailed along and could be seen optically as well as by radar. This would give away the false status of the decoys. It was decided that this information should be kept secret, so that it would not be of use to a potential enemy, hence the coverup.

George pointed out that Jacobs would not have been able to see the details he described, as the image of the warhead "would be less than six-thousandths of an inch long on the image orthicon face, or between two and three scan lines. We could not resolve an image of the warhead under these conditions; what is detected is the specular reflection of sunlight: as though caught by a mirror."

Hastings obviously prefers Jacobs's unlikely story to the explanation given by George, which is not surprising as he is noted for his UFO lectures about cases involving the military. His audiences are likely to prefer alien spacecraft to likely mundane explanations or tedious technical descriptions of what really happened.

Apart from an interesting piece on foo fighters by Michael D. Swords, the other articles are equally lacking in scientific rigour. Ann Druffel's 'Santa Catalina Channel cloud cigars', describes strange cloudlike objects seen at times in Southern California. Some of these could be orographic clouds, although most descriptions by witnesses are rather vague, and there are no photographs, and no meteorological data.

In his review of Kolm Kelleher and George Knapp's *Hunt for the Skinwalker*, Gildas Bourdais takes these jokers rather too seriously. (3)

The Pelican concludes that, while there is some good stuff in the Serious Ufologists' journals, it has to be sifted out from all the rubbish.

References:

1. *MUFON UFO Journal*, No. 249, January 1989. Also available at www.nicap.org/bigsur2.htm
2. 'The Big Sur UFO: An identified flying object', *Skeptical Inquirer*, Vol. 17, Winter 1993. Also available at members.aol.com/tpriny2/bigsur.html
3. For a more critical review by Peter Rogerson see *Magonia* 92, June 2006, also in the Reviews section of magonia.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk

A WEB OF FLYING SAUCER LIES AND VIDEO FOOTAGE

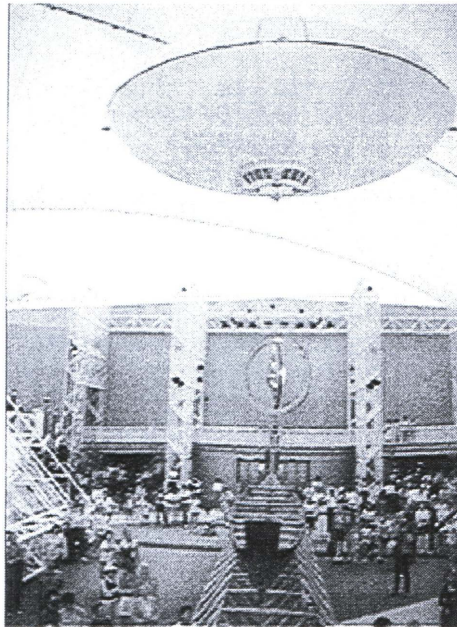
Nigel Watson

With the increasing popularity of such websites as YouTube, more and more UFO video clips and documentaries are being presented to the public without any critical filtering or restraint. That's great because we can all get easy access to material from the most obscure sources from anywhere in the world. The downside is that it attracts hoaxers and publicity seekers who want to manipulate and exploit the belief in UFOs. A case in point is the amazing footage of a flying saucer hovering just above the ground, apparently produced by the Italian Air Force. Two versions of this short footage are presented on www.youtube.com. The first to be downloaded claims that it is a "UFO over a river in Italy" It has had nearly 100,000 views since being posted on February 16 2007. [1]

Another version, [2] saying it was produced by the Italian Air Force has had nearly 3,000 views and a few comments. These are mainly sceptical. The most positive comment is that it looks real, though is probably man-made. "Detachment3" said its a "CGI hoax, old news, was debunked on AboveTopSecret.com ages ago." "ABSY" sums up the reaction as "Another bad old video, another hoax. Same O, same O yawnnnn!" Google also carries the footage. [3] This has attracted more than 40,000 viewers and the accompanying text says that: "This amazing UFO video footage was released by a source within the Italian Air Force. Probably not alien origin but this may show what technology the secret governments already have." The video sequence is not that new Italian UFO researcher and writer Paola Harris presented it in 2005 at the 36th Annual International MUFON Symposium held in Denver, Colorado. The fourth generation video tape was given to her and other UFO researchers by an anonymous source. No details were given about who shot the video but it is her opinion that the craft is of terrestrial origin. She speculates that it is a military prototype. In an email sent out by her on 17 April 2007 she stated:

"To All No! This old Film Footage I have been showing for 3 years and It was given to Us (by - NW) Italian Researchers...Not By the Air force...It is our Technology. I had the film analyzed in

Hollywood. It is a real object in the film. It has been shown in my MUFON and Laughlin Presentations and someone put it on U-TUBE and Google !This all takes place in the Veneto region of Italy at a place called Ponte di Giulio..Near Aviano NATO Base. It is a dry river bed where the military does Manuvers and the photographer was on a tripod waiting for the object to come out of the woods. I doubt aliens appeared there!"



One uncharitable contributor to a forum on abovetopsecret.com "Vipassana", forgetting that Harris is Italian, thought this statement: "Seems like a fairly inarticulate letter by someone who is an important researcher. It honestly reads like a 5th grader slapped it together in 2 minutes. "2ndly (sic!), if Italy possesses (sic, again) technology like this, than it needs to be released immediately. Any device that can move like that has the potential to dramatically change the world, and perhaps even put a stop to global warming and poverty. "I smell a fake." Comments about the original You Tube posting range from outright wonder to dogged scepticism. It is either regarded as the best ever footage of a real flying saucer or a neat piece of CGI workmanship.

After covering these possibilities a contributor called "Star GateSG7" seemed to be on the right track: "This film is filmed in Quebec just north of the military UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle - NW) facility of Bombardier (they also make the Peanut UAV) It's based on a 1986 design called Hystar originally designed as a Lighter-than-air ship - they added multiple lightweight Rotax engines and thrust vectoring (see pods and vents in videos) and expensive gyroscopes and control software - ain't that hard to do though..." In a later contribution he states: "Actually I have made a mistake...This footage was taken in France OR Italy but the aircraft is still based upon a 1986 Canadian Design called Hystar. The Engines are indeed Bombardier Rotax turbines and the craft is a French Dassault/Italian Avroni Motobecane/Robert Bosch Germany and a Canadian Bombardier collaboration."

An early Hystar model was certainly flown at the Canadian pavilion during the Vancouver Expo in 1986. The 16ft diameter craft was driven by five rotors and kept aloft by helium gas. It was such a hit that the crowds often broke out with spontaneous applause after its regular performances. The Hystar Aerospace Corporation was granted a US Patent <http://www.patentstorm.us/patents/4685640-description.html> on August 11, 1987.

The application states it is: "An air vehicle for lifting loads generates lift forces from helium gas within a torus-shaped envelope having a central passageway, and from a fan arrangement designed to direct air downwardly through the passageway. Lateral propulsion units are provided on the envelope. In one embodiment, the fan arrangement comprises two fans carried by a saddle supported on the envelope, while in another embodiment a single fan is carried by a gondola suspended from the envelope."

On the 25 January 1996 a larger, 18ft Hystar circled over Earls Court, West London, reaching heights of 400ft. This Hystar 101 was fitted with eight rotors that could propel it in all directions and even put it into a spin. Its Canadian inventor, George Nankovich, planned to produce more of these craft in Britain and claimed that he had a 140ft

Hystar on his drawing boards that would carry 20 passengers at an altitude of 10,000ft. The latter project doesn't seem to have come to fruition, after being used for exhibitions and shows the Hystar has found a more serious role. It is now being operated as a landmine detection vehicle by The Alliance Enterprise Corporation (TAE). It is described as a highly versatile LML vehicle that can detect mines more efficiently than most other methods:

"The LML Aircraft is an ideal platform to carry the landmine sensors because of its unusual flight capabilities. "The LML can fly forward, backwards, and sideways at extremely low altitudes and at continuously slow speeds as well as hover, fly vertically up and down, and rotate 360 degrees while flying in any direction. "In addition, the LML is a stable platform because the aircraft does not bank while turning, climbing or descending. Also, the LML has virtually minimal vibration." So was it a Hystar or LML as it is now called responsible for the Italian video?

As Paola Harris noted the camera was on a tripod and the cameraman seems to know that something is about to happen. Before the UFO becomes visible the camera zooms in to the rough location where it comes into view. The craft seems to "perform" in front of the camera and then it shoots away as the camera zooms out. The position and zooming of the camera and its distance from the UFO gives the impression that this is something that suddenly came into view at an opportune moment, rather than being an official, professional recording of an aircraft test by the Italian Air Force.

Philip Mantle, who helped reveal the notorious 'Alien Autopsy' film footage to the public, and is the author of *Alien Autopsy Inquest*, notes: "There are two ways to look at this type of thing. One is to get the footage out in the open in order to stimulate debate, uncover more details etc. The other is to keep it under wraps until full analysis has been conducted. There is no right or wrong way, it is just a matter of opinion. In the days before the internet it was common practice to look at photographs and film/video in detail before releasing them. Today's world is much different with more and more people having computer access around the world. For the record, I have looked at the video in question, and this is just my opinion and nothing more, but I would err on the side of caution as I think the footage is highly suspect. It has the 'feeling' of computer graphics to me."

Nick Pope is equally cautious about this film: "Interesting if true', as they say in the world of intelligence analysis. Determining the film's provenance will be difficult if not impossible, given the mix of UFO researchers and anonymous sources. In my official UFO investigations I could call on technical specialists who could analyse and enhance photos and videos. The fact that this video was shot in daylight and that other features are visible means it should be possible to

determine some characteristics of the object, including its diameter. It should also be possible to determine whether the film has been faked."

For an expert opinion I contacted Michael George, Senior Consultant, Forensic Video / Audio for BSB Forensic Ltd.

He said: "Original footage must always be examined to give clear and precise expert witness evidence. "In this instance I assume access to original footage is a non starter. The interesting point in this footage is at the end of the recording. The 'off' (where the imagery ends and then shows a fighter jet) point on this footage shows it has been edited already. It also shows that the two clips have been produced from two separate cameras and edited together. "All good fun though, haven't had much time to examine it." I should add here, that only the Google version shows the tape break up and then shows a fighter aircraft in-flight for a brief moment.

Nick Pope acknowledges that, "analysis of such footage is intriguing. Technology to create a realistic fake moves on, but so does the technology to spot one. Only industry insiders will be able to give you the current state of play and as in many fields, the experts may not all agree. It may not be possible to give a definitive answer on analysis alone, which is why I always recommend a holistic approach to such investigations: investigate not just the footage, but the story, the participants, the witness, etc."

When I asked Paola Harris for more details about the analysis and origin of the footage, she told me: "The People who did it are record executives who had the money to do it in Hollywood. (The)...7th generation (video) cassette tape (was) given to me by researcher Paolo Pasqualini who got it from others. It was just disseminated to us Researchers...And Since it is a real object in a recognizable place, we all showed it. It is a mystery! IT IS NOT A VIDEOGAME! "I will continue to show it as (an example of - NW) Back-engineered Technology. Since Ponte Di Giulio (Veneto region) is near a NATO Base AVIANO.. It would be American Technology ... What the object was... Who Knows?? I thought initially it was created...But It was filmed!"

Henry "Aviation Jedi" Eckstein (aka 'Star GateSG7') in a long email to me, with the provision that his "Speculation is based upon reasonable study of common autonomous flight control systems and modern UAV aircraft design" notes: "The craft in the Italian video was possibly (but NOT absolutely confirmed) filmed in the foothills of or around the vicinity of the Italian Dolomite Mountains possibly even near Cortina. The other possible location is in the French Alps near Chamonix. One reason I said Quebec in an earlier comment was the design of the bridge and and some of the background buildings suggest a North American location for this video and the Bombardier UAV

facilities are fairly close by to what could be a region near Mont Tremblant in Quebec, Canada (home of Bombardier).

"For the technical specs. I do remember reading an article somewhere in the 1995 to 1998 issues of Aviation Leak [Aviation Week] magazine which detailed a secret UAV aircraft based upon the 1986 Hystar design. (I cannot remember the exact dates or issues) The 1986 Hystar was originally intended to be a heavy lift craft for logging operations and industrial transportation use. The original design called for a series of thrust vectored craft between 200 ft (60 meters) to 600 feet (200 meters) in diameter designed to lift up to 100 metric tonnes or 100,000 kilos (250,000 lbs). The company went bankrupt due to lack of marketplace acceptance and flight control issues during heavy weather operations. The small-form-factor prototypes would crash into trees during testing because the radio control operator wasn't fast enough to respond to the wind gusts.

"Modern autonomous flight control software is now miles ahead of the original 1986 design and can now easily take the place of a slow human operator. The biggest problem to solve is cost and time of software development. As a serious programmer with large amounts of experience creating autonomous vehicle control software, I can assure you that getting a large vehicle to move such as that shown in the Italian River video is no small feat. I also remember AW magazine mentioning multiple countries including Canada (which makes Rotax Engines), Italy (makes the body of the craft), France (which makes Computer Aided Design - Machining/Finite Element Analysis Software) and Germany (Robert Bosch Company which makes flight control software for commercial airliners) cooperating on a UAV development effort.

"I also remember that the article said that the craft would look something like the 1950's era Avro Aerocar which is very similar to the design of the Hystar and the Italian River aircraft. The Avro Aerocar was Canadian built but funded by the US Air Force. With no flight control software the Avro was a complete failure because it was so unstable a flight design. If someone had the foresight to add a rubber skirt to it the modern hovercraft would have been invented 10 years earlier than it was.

"Having Bombardier, Motebecane, Dassault, and Bosch makes perfect sense for creating such a UAV craft because these are world leaders in engine systems, lightweight metal vehicle structure engineering, design software and flight control systems. I can tell it's a thrust vectored vehicle because of the flaps that deploy about halfway through the video on the bottom and top sides of the craftand I also notice a slight heat vapour trail that was highlighted in the video compression artefacts just as the craft was passing by the

camera operator. The heat vapour trail indicates a combustion engine probably a turbine called a Rotax which can be found in many Skidoo Snowmobiles or Jet Ski personal water craft. (Bombardier is the world's largest maker of High Thrust Rotax Engines) The way the aircraft also bobbed and spun about quite quickly indicates auto-adjustment software that is redirecting air-blasts through ducts in the sides of the craft (duct openings are near the upper and lower flaps) in reaction to gusts of wind and aerodynamic forces.

"That the craft is quite level in flight indicates a twin-fan setup in the middle of the aircraft in which each turbo-fan is counter-rotating in order to create a stable vortex. You can see some heavy video compression artifacting at the bottom of the video frame which indicates to me that dust is being swirled up by downward thrust engines. Video compression can't handle small fast-moving objects so we get extra blockiness in the bottom on the video frame which indicates a possible dust cloud caused by a turbofan. I also suggest that the end of the video was added later in post production as an internal attempt to show future possibilities to audiences such as the defence departments of purchasing countries.

"I estimate a 300 Horsepower Rotax engine *could* do a 10kmh to 300kmh acceleration as what was demonstrated in the video. Remember that the craft in the video was no bigger than about 12 ft (4 meters) to (16 feet) 5 meters in diameter and would have been built of lightweight aluminium in the body and carbon composites for the fan blades with a total weight of no more than 120 to 150 kilos. So performance of what was seen at the end of the video is not totally out of the question but as per the rest of the video, it suggests that the engine produced about 150 to 200 horsepower. I also estimate it's flight range to be about 25 to 50 km because of fuel capacity issues. And based upon the vapour trail I say it takes a high-temperature fuel to make it out of the thrust ducts so I think they are using something like super-vaporized kerosene, Jet-A or possibly even something hydrazine based (i.e. monohydrazine).

"On a commercial scale, I would estimate ten million US dollars in total development and final build costs and of that 10 million, I would say that seven million US dollars would be for the design and flight control software and about 5000 thousand man-hours over two to three years of carefully calculated development time. For me to duplicate this, I could do it for about \$25,000 for a Kevlar or Zylon-based fibre body, about \$10,000 for Rotax Engines and about 1000 hours of design and build time (I have a three axis CNC machine and top-notch carbon fibre composite build experience)

"The reason I can do it cheaper, faster and better is because I estimate this film to be about seven to ten years old because of the craft's 1990's era design and since it's now

2007 and I have a four processor, three gigahertz design workstation with sixteen gigabytes of RAM and three terabytes of disk space, I can definitely do it faster than what the original designers did who only had access to vastly slower computer design hardware.

"I'd also do a few more changes on the thrust vectoring such as adding computer-controlled variable diameter thrust vector nozzles and ceramic/carbon composites for BOTH the turbine blades and internal engine components. Since Zylon/Kevlar is lighter and stronger than the equivalent aluminium I would build it out of these high-tech fibres. Internal Engines parts I'd make out of Aluminium Oxide Ceramic which could withstand 2000 degrees Celsius and higher pressures and modern software could super-vaporize the fuel and shape the combustion cycle for optimal fuel efficiency and maximum thrust. This means I could up the horsepower to around 800 hp to 1000 hp and reduce weight using simple and inexpensive Jet-A fuel.

For slower but more long distance recon versions, I'd use a turbo diesel engine with low-speed, wide-bladed and wide aperture turbofans and pressurized fuel tanks to give me about 300 km of range. Although I don't have much other info on this aircraft I think we can safely say this is *not* an Alien UFO and is *definitely not* out-of-this-world technology. The design is too mainstream and

American Utilitarian in look and the buildings in the background also seem too North American in design. So I will suggest somewhere near Mont Tremblant in Quebec, Canada rather than in Italy or France.

"Please also notice the F117 stealth fighter at the very last few frames of the video? It also suggests a North American location, but I do remember that F117's were stationed in Aviano, Italy in the mid 90's so that river could be located near Aviano, Italy."

Until we get any further substantial information about the circumstances of where, how and why this footage was recorded we can only speculate about the real origin of this craft. For the time being the footage makes us consider what constitutes UFO video evidence when computer software and models can be easily manipulated and constructed. In addition, the proliferation of internet sites that allow you to anonymously post your work for worldwide attention means that faking UFO footage is a rich field of endeavour for pranksters and hoaxers. Such videos can only be taken seriously if they are backed-up by reliable independent witnesses. Plus, documentation recording the full details of how the images came to be captured, should also be included, otherwise these internet videos are only of entertainment value.

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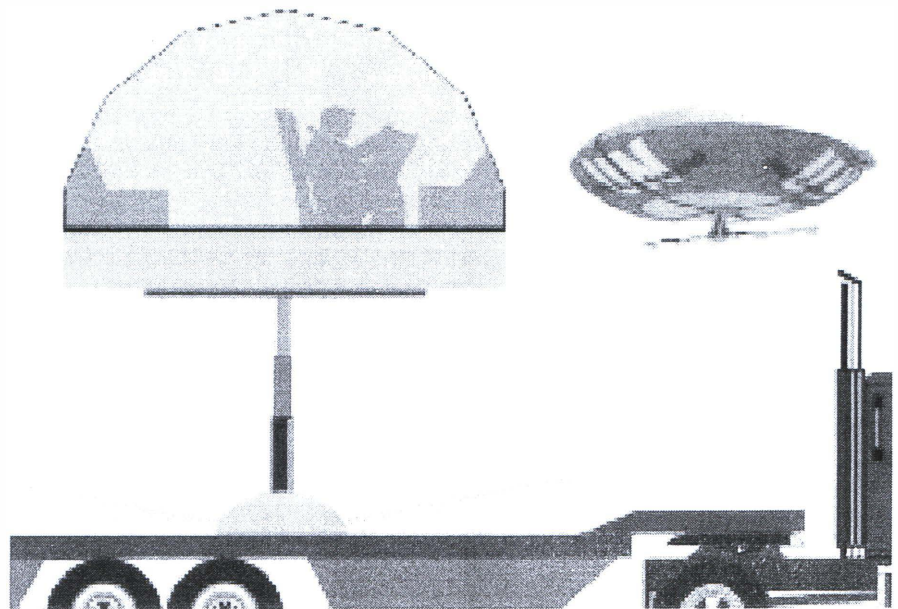


Diagram of Hystar landmine detection from the Alliance Enterprise Corporation

even some modern toys can emulate what was seen on the video. The problem part of the footage is the sudden burst of acceleration at the end of the footage which to me is an editing/post-production effect intended to show future possibilities rather than show an actual performance envelope. I still have misgivings about the location of the film because the bridge design seems too North

Web references:

- [1] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdyQu5Zx8xw>
- [2] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TASsaTZMvTc>
- [3] http://video.google.com/video_play?docid=-398836828825804273_&pr=goog-si

Fear and Loathing in New Hampshire

Peter Rogerson

In September 2000 Karl Plock and Peter Brookesmith organised a symposium for those interested in the Betty and Barney Hill case, at the Indian Head Inn, New Hampshire, near to the site of alleged abduction. Present were the editors, Robert Sheaffer, Dennis Stacey, Eddie Bullard, Hilary Evans, Greg Sandow, moderator Marcello Truzzi, sponsor Joe Firmage and a guest appearance by Betty herself, along with her niece Kathy Marden. The proceedings of the symposium have now been published under the title *Encounter at Indian head: the betty and Barney Hill UFO Abduction Revisited*. [1] The book also includes written contributions by Martin Kottmeyer and Walter N Webb, though it omits Sandow's contribution.

This was probably the first detailed reinvestigation of the Hill's story in years, and the various contributors present their own take on the case. Dennis Stacey has trawled the literature to come up with what might be the best consolidated version of the story, there being numerous contradictions in the originals. Right from this early paper there is a surprise. At a crucial point in Barney's first encounter, where the public accounts have him grabbing a car jack for protection, it is now revealed that he got out a .22 pistol which he had hidden in the trunk (importing guns into Canada is illegal) That's an important point and one which though commented on briefly is never really taken up by the contributors.

Marcello Truzzi reviews the arguments pro and con the story, and the kinds of inferences which can be made as to what makes a claim remarkable. He makes a very interesting point, if UFO encounters were normal and commonplace, so you could turn your watch by the 6:15 from Zeta Reticuli, would the evidence in this case lead to any action (ie a demand for extradition from the ZR authorities)? More to the point would anyone prosecute an ordinary criminal where the evidence was as weak as this. Truzzi argues that ufologists are prepared to accept the Hill's claims *because* not *in spite* of its radically anomalous nature. This seems to be true, when you argue with ufologists as to whether they would accept a claim by a

stranger that they were, for example, the simultaneous lover of Princess Diana and Hillary Clifton and knew all sorts of secrets? On the evidence, they would answer no, but that the UFOs are different. In other words the more extraordinary the claim, the weaker the evidence required.

The papers clearly divide between the psychosocial approaches of Hilary Evans, Peter Brookesmith and Martin Kottmeyer, the sceptical approach of Sheaffer and the more believing approach of Bullard, Plock and Webb. To some degree the writers appear to write past each other, though Brookesmith and Plock have clearly spent hours pouring over maps and have both driven the route several times themselves. Even after that they still could not agree as to whether or not there was missing time. Hilary Evans shows through a variety of stories how people can have a variety of imaginary or virtual experiences, some a good deal stranger than the Hill's. Brookesmith searches for the mythic meaning of the story in the encounter with the 'other', and Kottmeyer continues his hunt for cultural sources. Bullard reprises his old 'entirely unprejudiced' arguments, which were refuted years ago. He now tries to wriggle out of the embarrassing fact that the post 1987 abduction stories contain the central motif of the hybrid baby, which barely rates a mention in his own survey, by arguing that there were hybrid baby/sexual abduction themes in the early literature. Sure there were but these were fictional stories in tabloids. The space alien motif in ufology does not come from abductees but from contactees Cynthia Appleton and Elizabeth Klarer.

This might be a moot point because much of the abduction scenario had already been presented in John Wyndham's 1957 novel *The Midwich Cuckoos*, filmed in 1960. Here we have such motifs as missing time, the freezing of whole communities, the alien babies, the hive like mind(s) of the alien children and their strange hypnotic eyes.

If Sheaffer's skeptical argument contains weaknesses, which Plock can exploit, Plock's contribution is very weak, and I can't help wondering if he wasn't just

going through the motions because it was part of the contract. Plock argues that a literal reading of the Hill story leads to the conclusion that they really were kidnapped by folk from Zeta Reticuli. The problem that he has is quite simple, it just doesn't. The Hill's aliens are very poor aliens indeed, they are just far too human. They look more or less like us, except for a few minor anatomical differences, far less than the differences between humans and their very close cousins the chimpanzees. They act like people, they have books, and maps, and mutinous crews, they wear uniforms. Their technology was getting old fashioned in 1960, its levers and wall-map positively antiquated by now. Their conversations are self contradictory. Plock argues that the aliens translation machine and memory erasers might be working badly, but if the aliens really had a translation machine and a memory eraser then they already know far more about human physiology and psychology than we ourselves do, so why go round abducting people?

Of course someone might try and rescue the ETH by arguing that the real aliens are so alien and what happens to the abductees on board so incomprehensible that their brains can't process it at all, and substitute more mundane imagery. Of course if you go down that road then you have to use psychosocial reasoning to account for the precise nature of the screen imagery, which makes the aliens redundant.

The Hill story reads like a product of the human imagination, replete with human imagery and human concerns, and that is what it almost certainly is. Its story line must be derived from the lives, hopes and fears of the Hills.

There are clues here, some more obvious than others. Right on the surface is the fact that Betty and Barney Hill were not Mr and Mrs Average, they were very unusual people indeed. Even today 'interracial' marriage is far less common in the US than in the UK. In 1960, when the Hills got married, they were very rare indeed. The black population of New Hampshire was small, the Hills may well have been the only black/white

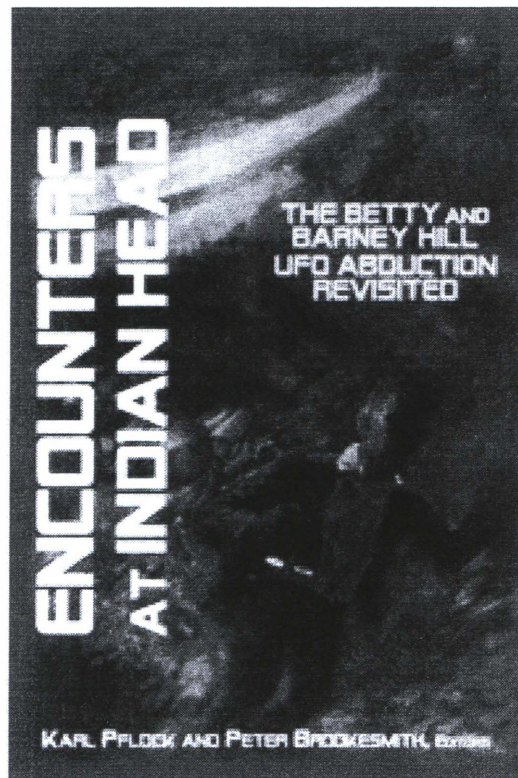
couple in the whole state. That took a lot of guts, and a lot of risk taking. Betty was a professional woman with a higher status job than her husband, again rare. She had been divorced, and her first husband had also been married before. Was she the cause of his first divorce? We don't know, nobody has asked. We do know that Barney's divorce was bitter and that the first Mrs Hill loathed Betty and would not let her children meet her. To have lost her husband to a white woman would, one imagines, have been a very humiliating and enraging experience for a black woman of her time. One can perhaps imagine the insults that were thrown and the suggestions made, for example that Betty and her white liberal friends were using Barney as a token 'negro' to show how progressive and enlightened they were.

Unfair no doubt, but such things hurt. Barney is clearly under huge stress, he has the long commute job, the bitter rows with the ex, and Betty, one suspects, was not the easiest person to live with. There is clearly some extra tension at this time. Betty's niece remembers Barney becoming withdrawn at around this period. She, who was a child at the time, connects this with the abduction story, but there are hints that the real trigger had occurred earlier.

There were pre-existing problems in Barney's life. He had had a drink problem which reappeared after the encounter, heavy drinking is often a sign of stress and distress; what was this stress and distress in the past? Then there is the gun, it's hard to know how much of a clue that is, without knowing how common handgun ownership was in 1961 New Hampshire. My first thought is that I would suspect it was uncommon, compared say with the ownership of hunting rifles. This was not a high crime area. If this is the case, then this might well suggest that Barney felt under special threat. The Hill's marriage, political activity and her job as a child welfare officer could all have lead to threats. The gun, and its deliberate hiding suggests that Barney felt like a man being hunted.

When the trip starts Barney (and Betty) are already tired out, and the journey was poorly planned, and appears to have been increasingly stressful. Barney feels more and more exposed. We might never know exactly what happened on that night, but stress, exhaustion, sensory deprivation and episodes of micro-sleep and micro-REM seem to have all played a part.

Note also that Barney's reaction to the light in the sky gives lie to the 'entirely unpredisposed' kind of argument. He is clearly in a state of near hysteria and total panic, so much so he cannot clearly remember what happened. If indeed his later withdrawal, return to drinking etc., stem from that night, we need look no further. Far from being the man who protected the little woman, he bricked it. The motifs of 'semen extraction' and



anal probe which occur in his hypnotic regression may have a more mundane cause in that he wet and soiled himself in panic, a very traumatic and shaming experience.

To rub it in, Betty in her dreams becomes the heroine who stands up to the grey meanies, tells them off (after all she is a Barrett of New Hampshire). Don't these dreams emphasises who wears the trousers and has the balls in this family?

What is Barney afraid of, but which Betty Barrett of New Hampshire can stand up to? Look at the pictures of the aliens with their caps and jackets and trousers, remember those charts and that mutinous crew. Charts aren't much use in space ships hopping between stars through wormholes, using space warp or the Z-process which no human mind could ever understand. These are images of ships and the sea. These are sailors. What kind of sailors steal people? Slavers of course. We have all overlooked this because we are not Black. This is the central fear which grips Barney, the terrible others who are both us and not us and are going to take him back into slavery. Betty comes from the dominant white culture, she cannot feel the fear of being turned back into a slave. She can stand up to the crew. In her vision the sailors are more like a chaotic pirate crew.

Brookesmith quotes several commentators who hint at this, but not making it explicit. Of course, in a sense slavery has become a motif of the abduction encounter, the idea that they will take away our humanity. Perhaps the abduction narrative reminds us we are all black now.

The alien motif points to the distinctive character of Anglo-American slavery, traditional societies, which did not

pay lip service to human equality could treat slaves as subordinate groups of human beings with their own status, allied to that of serfs for example. However 'liberal' individualistic Anglo-American society, with its Christian belief and its lip service to 'all men being created equal' could only gets its conscience around slavery by reducing the slaves to a sub-human status.

The "medical examination" and the symbolism for the "fertility test" for Barney are images of the farmyard, the prodding and probing on the auction block. For Betty they are perhaps medical procedures to test for the presence of radioactivity following the resumed nuclear tests. Betty has incorporated Barney's fear of capture into her dreams but she cannot really understand what it is about. Her aliens let them go, and Barney takes this on board, because it means that he has escaped; these aren't slavers after all.

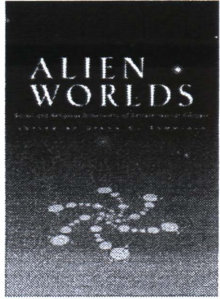
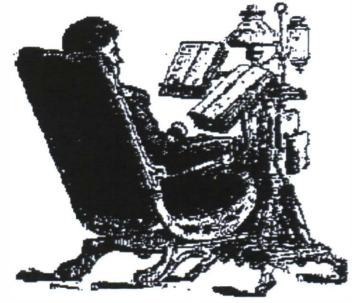
Yet is he going to be really free? What for Barney was an event of unadulterated horror, becomes for Betty a grand adventure, one which will take her far from the shores of planet reality. As just about all the participants of this symposium agree, Betty later went into some very strange places indeed, seeing flying saucers all over the place and recounting many an unlikely adventure, becoming a sort of cult leader. To put no finer point on it, she was becoming a contactee. Several of the writers gloss this as a reaction to the grief following Barney's untimely death, however Jacques Vallee in his diaries shows that Betty was into this mode as early as 1966, three years before Barney died. Though it was always put about that the Hills were reluctant to come forward with their adventure, it is now conceded otherwise, they gave several lectures, or rather Betty did, it was Betty who called the Air Force, Betty who contacted NICAP and so on. As the stories change the aliens become friends and begin to develop supernatural powers, such as leaving leaves in a neighbours apartment, appearing over another's house in answer to Betty's prayers. The iron wall that some ufologists believe exists between the contactees and the abductees looks more like a paper curtain.

Of course there is much about the story we will probably never resolve, though we could probably learn more by checking the local papers of the period to get a deeper feel of the community in which they lived and how they interacted with it. It would be interesting to know what Barney's children made of the story, and there is always the possibility that some old diary or letters could send us in another direction.

[1] Karl Pflock and Peter Brookesmith (editors). *Encounters at Indian Head: the Betty and Barney Hill UFO Abduction Revisited*. Anomalist Books, 2007. £12.00

Book Reviews

All reviews by Peter Rogerson, except where stated



Dianna G. Tumminia (editor).
Alien Worlds: social and religious dimensions of extraterrestrial contact. Syracuse University Press, 200. £23.50

An interesting collection of papers dealing with the

religious dimensions of the contactee and abduction movements and related topics. There are the usual discussions of the established UFO religions such as the Raelians, Unarius and Aetherius Society, but there are also looks at lesser known movements such as Allen Michaels Universal Industrial Church of the New World Comforter with a grand membership of ten. This organisation combined extraterrestrialism with a mixture of Christianity and Marxism in a concoction which harks back to the days of nineteenth century communist communal movements. Jerome Clark traces the later career of Dorothy Martin alias Marian Keech of *When Prophecy Fails* fame. Often seen as a group of isolated eccentrics, Martin's circle was much more closely bound into the esoteric and cultic milieu of the period than was recognised at the time. Martin reinvented herself as Sister Thedra of the Brotherhood of the Seven Rays, and after a rather peripatetic existence ended up at the New Age centre of Sedonia, Arizona.

Beyond this clear cults there exists a wide range of 'religious' phenomenology within ufology. Abductees and their support centres receive a fair amount of attention. Norwegian ufologist Georg Ronnevig explores the role of aware sleep paralysis in the rise of the abduction mythology. He argues that ASP though known and named in many traditional cultures had become a 'homeless' and largely unmentionable experience in contemporary America, until the presentation of ASP episodes as 'alien abductions' in the writings of Whitley Streiber and Bud Hopkins created a vocabulary and explanatory system by which such experiences could be recounted. This led to the shift from outdoors to domestic abduction narratives, as people revised their ASP experiences in light of the new system. The ideological belief, in the therapeutic

community, in the existence of amnesia and repressed memories led to an acceptance of fragmentary ASP imagery as simply the tip of a submerged iceberg of repressed experience which could be recovered by hypnosis. (This of course extends beyond ASP, just about any odd, anomalous or just fragmentary memory could be seen as the clue as to the existence of this hidden depth) The abduction experience is therefore the supernatural or religious narrative of the therapeutic society.

Scott Scribner discusses the religious dimensions of the abduction experience more fully, locating it in classical types of human fears, and emphasising that abduction narratives tell us far more about the human condition than any hypothetical aliens. He suggests that instead of emotionally loaded words such as 'abductees' and 'experiencers' we use the more neutral term 'teller'. The teller is the person telling a (purported) first hand story, contrasting with the 'narrator', the entrepreneur or ringmaster who presents other peoples' stories.

This seems to be the distinguishing mark between the contactee and the abductee stories. The contactee is the centre of his/her own story, the teller is the hero; in the abduction narratives it is the investigator, the narrator who is the hero. He (and just occasionally) she knows much more the 'real' story than the teller, and is able to weave the isolated fragments of the teller's memories and dreams into a comprehensive narrative. No wonder that there are such strong similarities between abduction narratives.

In his study of abduction survivors' groups, Christopher Bader notes that they tend mainly to recruit from white women, with a higher than average percentage having a college education - quite a contrast from the earlier imagery of 'trailer trash' abductees. This profile would I suspect echo those of many other therapeutic communities, perhaps one can almost talk of the 'therapeutic classes'. It suggests that they recruit from people who do not have obvious objective causes such as poverty, racism, abusive partners, drug or alcohol problems to account for their vague sense of unease and not-rightness of their lives.

One of the problems that sociologists examine is how science is distinguished from pseudo-science. Pierre Lagrange examines how this operated in

French ufology, where the boundary was between 'contactism' and 'scientific ufology'. From Lagrange's account it appears that French ufology came, as in Britain, out of an occultist milieu, in this case the 'Atlantean' movement. Pioneer writers like Marc Thirouin evaluated cases on an individual basis, without drawing a permanent ideological wall between contactees and witnesses. New groups such as GEPAN arose to create a more 'scientific' approach. Groups founded by contactees could turn into investigative groups and vice-versa. Even so the techniques of the 'investigations' would cause most mainstream scientists eyebrows to raise, one group critically reinvestigated the contactee claims of its founder using 'psychological, graphological and astrological data'.

This difficulty in creating a separation between science and the occult is clearly demonstrated by the article by Jacques Vallee, which has scientific sounding critiques of the American abductionist movement and its manipulation of evidence, along with sections which suggest that he really does believe in the existence of sylphs and similar boggarts. Perhaps the demarcation never really existed in the first place, and the origins of modern science are not quite what the textbooks would have us believe. I have already commented at times on the role of the occult in the lives of rocket pioneers such as Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Herman Orberth and Jack Parsons, and there is more on this line to come.

There are other papers, which are of a slighter character, or not so much on our subject which space does not allow us to discuss, but overall this is an interesting and valuable collection.



Jeff Meldrum.
Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science. Tom Doherty Associates, 2006. \$27.95

Jeff Meldrum is an actual credentialed scientist, an expert in human locomotion at Idaho State

University, and thus takes a scientific look at our old friend Bigfoot. On the surface at least this book looks like a detailed scientific examination of the Bigfoot reports and

traditions, one which comes to the conclusion that these may indeed be real animals possibly related to Gigantopithecus.

Meldrum is either a brave pioneer going out on a limb and willing to stake his reputation on assessing evidence for an animal that his colleagues ignore, or he is a victim of his own cleverness, trapped inside his specialist arguments and unable to detect the handiwork of human hoaxers. The lay reader is not really in a position to make much of a judgement on this, but there are some worrying signs of the latter. Rather than being an objective assessment of the evidence, at times the book seems to be looking for evidences to back up a pre-determined conclusion. For example, are his arguments that Gigantopithecus was bipedal little more than an attempt to square this with the Bigfoot stories? He argues that ancestral hominids show the mosaic of human and ape patterns of body structure which he sees in the Patterson-Gimlin film, but as Gigantopithecus was not a human ancestor, and was actually less closely related to humans than chimps and gorillas this seems to be an irrelevant point.

Then there is his endorsement of a number of contentious claims, which have been subject to much sceptical comment from the Fortean community itself, such as the Bluff Creek and Bossburg tracks. Then there is the Patterson-Gimlin film, subject to some pretty serious allegations of faking made by Greg Long (by no means a fully paid up member of CSICOP) and others. You don't have to take the 'confessions' of the various alleged hoaxers at face value to suspect something pretty dodgy about the whole thing. Meldrum does not refute Long's claim, he totally ignores them. Again the reader of this book will not realise that Bigfoot sighting reports have been made all across North America, many by witnesses as equally "credible" as those reporting from the Pacific North West.

This of course does not prove Bigfoot does not exist; it is entirely possible that there is some uncatalogued group of animals out there, but also that some of the better known or most dramatic stories are hoaxes. It does however place a question mark against Meldrum's judgement.

William Hirstein. *Brain Fiction: Self-deception and the riddle of confabulation*. Bradford/MIT Press. 2006. £11.95

show. Hirstein deals with phenomena with which perhaps conventional science is more at home, but ultimately may turn out to be more subversive of our conventional view of ourselves and our world. Confabulation is a syndrome encountered in patients with a variety of neurological damage; gaps in memory are filled with fantastic stories, which the patients themselves actually believe at the time. Hirstein shows how this confabulation can occur with other kinds of strange delusions generated by specific forms of neurological damage. People with certain kinds of strokes are paralysed down one side but refuse to admit the fact, others simply deny with existence of one side of their body and world.

More specific syndromes exist. In Capgras Syndrome people believe that their significant others have been replaced by impostors. Its opposite is Fregoli's syndrome in which strangers are perceived as the significant others (you might see the face of a relative on everyone you meet in the street for example), Intermetamorphosis, in which faces change before your eyes, Doubles Syndrome in which people come to believe they have an exact double; and other syndromes in which people can lose the ability to recognise faces at all.

In many ways these are extreme examples of things that happen to all of us. Who has not walked past an acquaintance without recognising them; who has not been embarrassed by going up to a stranger thinking them an acquaintance? More interestingly, Fregoli's Syndrome and Intermetamorphosis are very like phenomena reported from the séance room. The former in cases in which people 'see' the faces of loved ones in the features of the medium or her accomplice or even an old doll. The latter is represented by what was called transfiguration mediumship, in which the face of the medium seems to change into the face of one of the sitters significant others. All of these syndromes call into question the certainty of our perceptions and inferences about the world.

The paranormal phenomena discussed by Bobrow cover a range, from those which are simply weird but not fundamentally challenging our world view, to the hard core paranormal stuff. Bobrow's experiences also point out that raise the subject of the paranormal in a sympathetic sounding manner in any social group, and you will easily accumulate a raft of stories of anomalous experiences.

Bobrow draws his accounts mainly from the medical literature, giving lie the claim that such things are routinely censored out of the mainstream press. It has to be said in fact that the evidential standards of some of these stories fall below what would be acceptable in academic parapsychological literature, being of a largely anecdotal character. Some of the material reported here will be familiar to *Magonia* readers: we get

studies of NDE's, Ian Stevenson's reincarnation claims etc. Others are perhaps less familiar. Many people will have heard of body dysmorphia, the idea that one's body is fundamentally wrong, the commonest example is that of transgenerism, whereby someone feels trapped in the body of the wrong gender and often seeks reassignment surgery. This is often explained as having 'a woman's brain in a man's body' or vice versa; what then can we make of the case reported here of a man who believed he was a tiger trapped in a human body, I doubt anyone would assume he actually had a tiger's brain!

A problem with Bobrow's approach is that he is an a sense parachuting into the paranormal territory and cherry-picking stories, without being aware of the often complex and problematic background of impressive seeming cases, because they have been reported in the medical literature by authority figures with degrees and professorships and the sort.

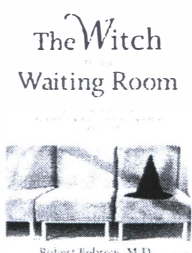
In some sense the odd experiences in these two books tend to contradict each other. Much of the material in Hirstein argues for the extraordinary way in which our memories, minds, thoughts and personalities are conditioned by the precise state of our brains; the more paranormal material in Bobrow arguing exactly the opposite, citing cases of memories acquired when the brain was supposed to be completely out of commission, being drained of blood during an operation, or even memories of other peoples lives. These two sets of claims become the nucleus around which rival camps of sceptics and paranormalists gather, each uncritically

accepting the claims of their own side while ignoring or vilifying the claims of the other.

Keith Chester. *Strange Company: Military Encounters with UFOs in WWII*. Anomalist Books, 2007. £12

I have rather mixed feelings about this book. On the one hand it is clear that the author has put a great deal of effort into assembling a large collection of stories of strange things seen in the skies during the Second World War and the years leading up to it. This will make interesting reading for those new to the saga of the foo-fighters, or those who think that the modern age of UFOs began with Roswell. On the other, like so much UFO literature, it is not primarily concerned with investigating what exactly gave rise to these stories and the experiences behind them, as providing 'evidences' for the existence of the ETH.

The reader who reads this book carefully, i.e. checking the footnotes for every story, will conclude that the foo-fighters were not one thing at all, but a number of different



Robert S Bobrow. *The Witch in the Waiting Room: A physician investigates paranormal phenomena in medicine*. Thunders Mouth Press, 2006. \$15.95

Doctors experience some very strange things during the course of their professional lives, as these two books

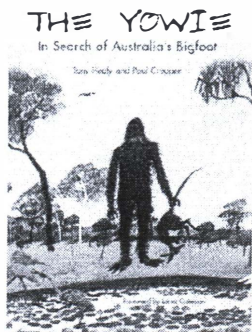
things, and that the vast of majority of those which were *contemporaneously reported* show very little resemblance to those modern UFO reports which purport to describe 'structured craft'. Of course there are reports of exotic structured craft, EM effects and other UFO esoterica enough, but a check on the footnotes shows that almost without exception these are stories told to ufologists years or decades later, in the age of the flying saucer. The motifs in the stories are motifs from the time of telling, not the time of their alleged occurrence. Of these stories, some, perhaps two thirds are cases in which 'memories' of some real event have been reconstructed on the basis of later UFO lore, further evidence of the essentially reconstructive nature of all memory, no doubt something which once conferred a good evolutionary advantage; the other third, one suspects, fall into the category of typical bullshitters' tales.

The problem is that the contemporaneously reported and the lore from the age of the flying saucer are presented in a single sequence, so that the reader who does not constantly go back to the footnotes is bound to confuse the two. Nor is there any sign of actual critical investigation. There is a case in the early part of the book which describes a dramatic EM case from the early 1930s. Chester says in his footnote "no further details are known ... other than newspaper articles and the 3 Fighter Squadron's historical records", with a reference to Jan Aldrich's 1947 website. The story is indeed on the site, marked as dubious, with no reference to 'newspaper articles'. There is a reference there to an alleged history of the 3 Fighter Squadron. The same story with the same reference appears in Michael Hall's *A Century of UFO Sightings*. It is a reference to a non-existent book by a non-existent publisher. It is almost certainly a modern (1994) hoax. Note that Chester has added the bit about 'newspaper articles'. If any ufologist had made the slightest effort to locate and check the original source they could have found this out quite quickly.

How many other cases exist in the literature because they are copied from source to source without anyone ever bothering to

find out if the alleged events ever occurred or the alleged witnesses ever existed?

Tony Healy and Paul Cropper.
The Yowi: In search of Australia's Bigfoot.
Anomalist Books,



2006. £12.00

Healy and Cropper's account of the Yowi 'phenomenon' or 'experience' or whatever

shows just how complex many anomalous personal experiences really are. They present a wealth of 'testimonial' evidence that people have encounters with both large and small apelike creatures in Australia, a country which is thought to have no truly native placental mammals; the dingo having been introduced by man. Not only is it difficult to see how any large primates could have got there, the descriptions of the Yowi with their huge canines don't really fit with anything in the fossil records.

For all the eyewitness testimony, not one body has been found anywhere, despite a fearfully high level of road kill, and the general massacres of people and animals carried out in the colonial period. Healy and Cropper also point out that similar accounts are found in many parts of the world, but not one skeleton, not one fossil nor piece of totally unambiguous physical evidence has been found anywhere, ever. This might be accounted for if these were such rare creatures that they almost never encountered, but the large number of reports seems to suggest otherwise. The main physical evidence presented are tracks on the ground, but even these are contradictory, some are five toed, some four and others three.

There are other strange features of the Yowi experience, the extraordinary, over the top fear witnesses can experience, senses of presence when nothing can actually been seen, and horrible overpowering smells. In some cases Yowi reports go alongside reports of "phantom felines", UFOs and even poltergeists.

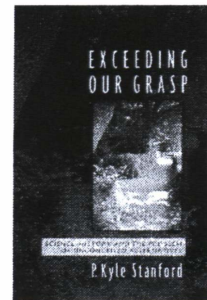
For many *Magonia* readers all of this will be familiar, the same ambiguities and lack of conclusive evidence applies indeed to reports of 'phantom felines', lake monsters etc., UFOs, ghosts and the like, to say nothing of actual reports of fairies and other things too bizarre ever to be the subject of an organized hobby.

Healy and Cropper consider all sorts of explanations, the psychosocial, the paws and pelts, and the frankly paranormal. They tend to the latter, but paranormal explanations still don't really fit. If these things are supposed to be material objects that have somehow fallen into our world from some parallel m-brane a trillionth of a millimeters away in some higher dimension, wouldn't one still sooner or later get killed in our world? If they are non material (whatever that is supposed to mean if not somehow hallucinatory) then how come they leave material traces? If they don't, and the traces are just an assortment of marks which have got associated with the experience, then we don't need to invoke paranormal explanations at all; if they do, then by what mechanism?

In our present state of knowledge I tend to the view that some sort of psychosocial approach is the best we have. People have experiences which they interpret or remember as encounters with the 'Others', the nature of

which is determined to at least some extent by the surrounding culture. People draw into that experience things coincidentally in the environment such as marks on the ground, and assume that they are physical evidence. The 'Yowi experience' like the 'UFO' experience

and the 'ghost experience' may be triggered by a great variety of different things (some of which might involve what for want of better words might be called uncatalogued or unassimilated aspects of nature).



R. Kyle Stanford. *Exceeding Our Grasp: science, history and the problem of unconceived alternatives.* Oxford University Press, 2006. £26.99

Are scientific theories at least provisionally and partially correct descriptions of reality, which give us the only possible working model of the world, or could they be overthrown tomorrow or some time after by some completely different theory which has just not been thought of? Using as an example the history of ideas of heredity in the 19th century, Stanford argues for the latter.

This is a technical and not easy to read book, and it is not clear just how radical his claim is. He does seem to say that we can rely on theories which can be tested by direct experience, it is those which involve hypothetical entities which our senses or our

instruments cannot yet detect which we have to be very careful of, but I note some inconsistencies in the arguments. Those with a technical scientific bent might like to come to grips with this.

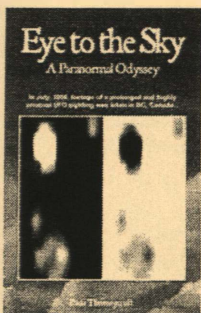


Joachim Fernandes and Fina D'Armada. *Celestial Secrets: the Hidden History of the Fatima Incident.* Translated from the Portuguese by Alexandra Bruce and edited by Andrew D Basiago. Anomalist Books, 2007. £9.99

There is material of potential interest in this book, and some good bits. There are the intriguing newspaper adverts put out by occultist and spiritist groups prophesying that 'something big' was going to happen on 13 May 1917, the date of the first Fatima 'encounter'. One of these was a group called *Stella Matutina*. One wonders if this had any connection with the British occult group of the same name of which W. B. Yeats was once a member. There is also a useful discussion as to how much the historical image of Fatima was concocted in the 1940s as propaganda for the Salazarist regime in Portugal.

Sadly none of this makes up for the numerous grievous faults: the continuing attempt to bludgeon the Fatima incident into ufology, the Forward by barmpt conspiracy theorist Jim Marrs, the dedication to John Mack, the presentation of numbers of dubious UFO tales at face value, the factual errors, the continuing quotation of extracts of documents rather than whole, the use of spurious 'authorities' such as James McCampbell (who as far as I know never claimed to be a 'nuclear scientist' and Erich Von Daniken. Add to that the generally rambling nature of this book and its numerous irrelevant asides, and the result is not remotely convincing. Needless to say it is no more 'open minded' than the most credulous work of Catholic piety, the authors just have a different set of prejudices and agendas.

What the authors have done though is to make us want to see a genuinely detailed, scholarly and agenda-free study of Fatima.



Karin Hopper Holloway (editor).
Alien Abduction Anthology: in our own words. Volume 1.
Experiencers ebooks, 2007. £11.99
Paula Thorneycroft.
Eye to the Sky: a

paranormal odyssey. Ecce Nova, 2006. £7.99
It is impossible to know whether the first person narratives contained in these books are based on actual experiences, and if so to what extent. Their main interest lies in providing something towards an answer as to why alien abduction narratives are so similar. These first person narratives show many distinct features from the classic Hopkins scenario, and show influences from the New Age milieu, political conspiracism and Christian Fundamentalism. What unites them is that they relay more personal themes which depart from the social constructed abduction narratives.

What then happens can take two forms: one is that, like Paula Thorneycroft, you meet Stanton Friedman who basically tells you that unless you are prepared to modify your narrative to meet the standard Hopkins/Jacobs format that they are all soulless alien rapists formulae, he is not interested. The other, if you persist with an idiosyncratic narrative, is that your story looks increasingly 'inauthentic'. The most divergent story in Holloway's book, in which a man in England recounts his teenage (?) experiences with being propositioned for sex by female alien robots, invites the assumption that you are either dealing with a case of pure creative writing, or someone with some fairly serious mental health issues. Yet it is no more self-evidently absurd than the canonical tales of hybrids and invisible aliens. The difference is that the canon represents now an approved folk narrative, and one validated by 'experts'.

Tales which diverge in other directions can receive other forms of validation from other social groups, the New Age/contactee movement or charismatic Christianity. In other words to receive acceptance a narrative must gel with the prior expectations of your audience as to what such a narrative will look like.

John Benedict Buescher. *The Remarkable Life of John Murray Spear: Agitator for the Spirit Land.* University of Notre Dame Press, 2006. £19.95

This is a book which perhaps reverses clichés: not so much a sufficiently advanced technology resembling magic, but a sufficiently advanced magic resembling technology; not so much as what starts out as tragedy ending in farce, as what starts in farce ends in the darkest tragedy. It also turns on its head all our preconceptions about those staid respectable Victorian ancestors.

For this is a tale of magical technology, radical politics, spiritualism, channelling, free love and guru-led cults, all the clichés of the modern world turned up a volume. John Murray Spear was an advanced radical clergyman in the Universalist Church who in the 1840s was in to all the radical causes of his day: abolitionism, prison reform, abolition of the death penalty, women's rights, etc. In the course of this work he got beaten up by a mob in

Portland, Maine and suffered a severe head injury. Slowly after this he seems to have got more eccentric, more reckless, and when a few years later spiritualism became all the rage, he became a spiritual healer and medium.

Not any old medium, mind you, bringing words of comfort from dear old Aunt Sadie, rather he became a channeler. Not for him the clichés of pious wisdom from Ramatha, no, he channels a gang of scientists, led by Benjamin Franklin, called The Electrifiers. They teach a new physics and give him visions of a fabulous new technology. This is not technology as we know it, it is more akin to Renaissance magic, a kind of magical prevision of the technological world to come. Much of this is at a level of surreal madness that few can have reached before or since: boats made in the shape of giant ducks powered by the psychic energy of couples having sex for example, or sewing machines constructed by a mixture of performance art, ritual magic and, you've got it, sex again!

At the heart of all of this is the ultimate magical machine, powered by Lord knows what and somehow gestated by a

woman; this is to be the machine as Messiah, the great liberating machine, a machine which will reproduce like a living organising and supply all human wants. And here is where things start to get creepy, for what this scientifically illiterate mid-nineteenth century clergyman and his gang of cranks are talking about is a universal, self-replicating, replicating machine, a Von Neumann machine. There are also images of what today we would call human-machine interface, cyborgs, nanotechnology, genetic engineering, radio telescopes, radio towers, 'young female mediums who will receive messages from afar (telephone operators?).

This is clearly a classical cargo cult, the product of a period in which the magic of the new technology is still essentially magic, but there are hints of this future technology, as though some book by a 21st century computer prophet had been sent back in a time machine, or a vision of the 22nd century seen through the eyes of a bunch of acid dropping hippies from the 1960s.

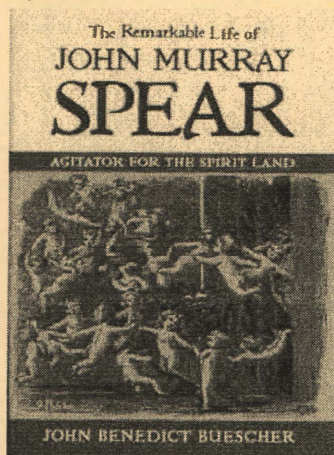
As one reads through Spear's often incomprehensible prose, the suspicion that he is suffering from some form of neurological damage, probably temporal lobe epilepsy, becomes pretty overwhelming. Can TLE allow glimpses into the future? Or is this an uncomprehending vision of a completely alien technology

At first that is a beguiling idea, and Spear's vision of a technology bringing about human liberation rather than oppression, of a democratic media, sexual and racial equality, looks attractive if rose tinted, but soon the story darkens, and we see a

prevision of Orwell. Free love turns out to mean quite the opposite, it means the guru or the state decides who will have sex with whom, the state decides who will have children and the state will raise them. Indeed childbearing will be industrialised and rationalised, so only the right kind of superior designer babies get born, A prevision of *Brave New World*, and of the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century. This is not a future to be looked forward to.

Of course, as good well brought up sceptical Magonians we should lay this fancy aside, but a 'rational' interpretation of Spear and his world is not much more comforting, for it suggests that the origins of many of what we imagine to be brand new avant-garde scientific, social and political ideas, founded on good rational principles, have frankly magical, occultist and deeply crazy roots. Cargo cults don't always emulate technology, sometimes technology emulates cargo cults.

I should point out that much of this is lost on Buescher who is a historian of religion, whose main interest is in Tibetan Buddhism.

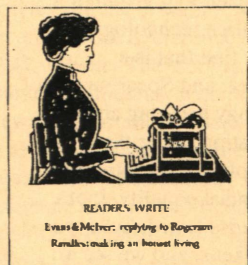


25 YEARS AGO

It's a long time since we've had room for the 25 Years Ago feature, so there's a lot to catch up on, and an opportunity to take a broader look at the sorts of issues which were troubling ufologists back in 1982.

Magonia 8, was largely concerned with tying up a few loose ends from previous numbers, with Roger Sandell concluding his three-part 'From Conspiracies to Contactees' series with a look at then-current topics. He cited the case of Luis Castillo, a Philipino petty criminal arrested in 1967 on suspicion of conspiracy to assassinate President Marcos: He was subjected to hypnotic questioning where he maintained over a period of years that "his mind had been controlled by some mysterious agency. He said that he remembered being taken to a 'factory' outside Chicago where he met a woman he did not

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know. The woman assigned him tasks which he carried out in a trance-like state" In 1963 he claimed he was taken to Dallas, accompanied by a man with 'oriental eyes' who ordered him to shoot President Kennedy. Of course, there was no evidence for these claims, and the case was soon forgotten apart from among some parts of the 1960s underground press. Roger comments that this case, with its strange similarities to MIB and abduction reports, provides an insight as to why conspiracy theories exert such an influence on the UFO world

With the subsequent explosion of conspiracy theories in ufology and elsewhere, fuelled by the growth of the Internet, we miss Roger's incisive analysis more than ever.

Magonia 8 was adorned with two pieces by Hilary Evans, one looking at the barmier fringes of ufological publishing, another responding to and critiquing Peter Rogerson's article 'Why Have All the UFOs Gone', which appeared in *Magonia* 7. However, re-reading this issue after twenty-five years, it is a brief comment in a letter from Shirley MacIver that caught my attention. She also took Peter to task for his article, particularly his comments "People no longer have faith in the saving power of modern technology" and "Perhaps one can see in the

short-lived 'Age of Aquarius' the last swansong of the belief in progress..."

Shirley will have none of this and challenges him: "Oh, yes? I have yet to be convinced that men or women will ever give up a belief in progress or cease the struggle for a better world..."

Unfortunately contemporary attitudes seem to confirm Peter's prognosis rather than Shirley's. There is suspicion, fear, even hatred of most of the progressive scientific developments of the last century: mass travel and communication, improvements in agriculture, even medical progress is suspect. Genetically-modified crops, which could help feed millions, becomes 'Frankenstein food'; stem-cell research which could pave the way to a cure many debilitating illnesses is 'playing God'; any attempt to solve environmental problems through using scientific methods become 'a technological quick-fix'. The emphasis now is safety-first, make-do-and-mend, don't travel, don't build, don't develop, know your place.

Sorry Shirley, but Peter was right: "... the myth of the 'new age on this world', from the mildest reformism to the most radical revolution, have failed", and the 'belief in progress' is in a very fragile state.

Magonia 9 opened with John Harney's now-legendary article 'Deserts of Arid Speculation', defending his *Plurality of Worlds* series from criticism by (again!) Hilary Evans, and the validity of speculation on the existence and nature of extraterrestrial life. Nigel Watson presented a classic 'ufology as literary criticism' piece, searching for the roots

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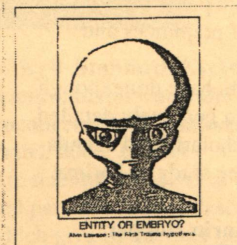


of ufology in the ideas of the Romantic Movement in the eighteenth century.

Magonia 10 was entirely devoted to the 'Birth Trauma Hypothesis' of Dr Alvin Lawson and Dr William McCall. At the same

time *Magonia* organised a small colloquium in London to allow the two authors to present their ideas to ufologists. Most *Magonia*

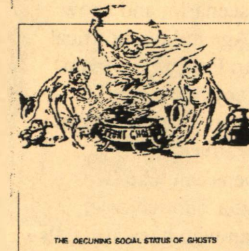
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readers will be familiar with at least the outline of Lawson and McCall's thesis: that the abduction experience is an entirely subjective phenomenon, and much of the imagery associated with it is based on subconscious memories of birth. The obvious resemblance between the classic big-headed abductor and a foetus has been remarked on by many other researchers. The problem from Lawson and McCall's point of view was that the theory had the support neither of mainstream psychology, nor mainstream ufology.

The controversy stirred up by Lawson and McCall carried on to the next issue, *Magonia* 11. Alvin Lawson made a

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further contribution showing imagery from other paranormal phenomena which he felt compared to birth trauma imagery. Ian Cresswell and Kevin McClure responded to the original article; in both cases their main objection to the theory was that it depended on the foetus being able to form an image of itself within the womb.

The main feature in this issue was Peter Rogerson's review of some recently published books on ghosts. He concludes that ghosts are on the retreat. Where once they exclusively inhabited ruined gothic abbeys or romantic castles, they are now reduced to the level of attractions in pubs and National Trust properties, or as poltergeist alter-egos of troubled teenagers in council houses. He suggested that "their historical role as dispensers of justice [is] replaced by modern police, their power to communicate across distances replaced by telephone and television."

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